

# VAIRĀGYA SANDĪPANĪ

‘Attributes of Saints that Kindle Renunciation &  
Attainment of Spiritual Blessedness’

[Original Text, Roman Transliteration and  
English Exposition with Notes]

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## CONTENTS

(1) Dedication:	Page— 4
(2) Preface:	Page— 5
(3) Chapter 1: ‘VAIRAGYA SANDIPANI’—Original Text + Roman Transliteration + English Rendering with explanatory notes:	Page—8 - 43
(4) Chapter 2: The Auspicious Virtues and Noble Characters of Saints:	Page—44 - 102
(1) Ram Charit Manas— Page: 44	
(2) Vinai Patrika—Page: 83	
(3) Dohawali—Page: 98	
(5) Chapter 3: Attainment of Spiritual Bliss, Peace and Beatitude: The Shanti Pada (Ram Charit Manas)	Page—103
(6) Appendix: About the Author:	Page—126

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## DEDICATION

To My Beloved Lord Ram

Nothing that I write is of my own creation. It is the Lord, my dearest and most beloved Lord Ram, who is getting it done. So I deserve no credit. However, being an ordinary man like the rest of us, I may have committed errors, and for those I beg forgiveness. I hope this book will help to continue the great tradition of singing the glories of the different aspects of same indivisible one Divinity in order to meet diverse needs of the Soul, the Spirit, one such being to find peace and happiness amidst the surrounding turmoil of the world by being able to spend some time in the thoughts of the Divine Being, the same ‘Parmatma’, the same Lord known by different names in different tongues.

No creature is perfect; it’s foolhardy to claim so. The best of paintings cannot replace the original; the best of words cannot express the original emotions and sentiments. Even the Lord was not satisfied by one flower or one butterfly—he went on endlessly evolving and designing newer forms. So, I have done my best, I have poured out my being in these books. Honestly, I am totally incompetent—it was the Lord who had done the actual writing and had moved my fingers as if they were merely an instrument in his divine hands. But nonetheless, it’s a tribute to the Lord’s glory that he does not take the credit himself, but bestows it to them whom he loves as his very own. And to be ‘his very own’ is indeed an unmatched honour. However, I still beg forgiveness for all omissions, commissions and transgressions on my part that I may have inadvertently made. It’s the Lord’s glories that I sing, rejoice in, write on and think of to the best of my ability. I hope my readers will also absorb the divine fragrance effusing from the flowers representing the Lord’s books, enjoy the ambrosia pouring out of them and marvel at the Lord’s stupendous glories.

I submit this effort at holy feet of my beloved Lord Ram whom even Lord Shiva had revered and worshipped. And surely of course to Lord Hanuman who was a manifestation of Shiva himself. Finding no words to express my profound gratitude to Ram, I just wish to remain quiet, and let my silence do the speaking and praying on my behalf.

I hope the reader will find my book useful and interesting. Since English is an international language, this book will help the English speaking world to access this masterpiece of classical Indian scriptural text.

“He leadeth me! O blessed tho’t!  
O words with heav’nly comfort fraught!  
What-e’er I do, wher-e’er I be,  
Still ’tis God’s hand that leadeth me!” [A Hymn by: Joseph Henry Gilmore in 1862.]

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia  
Author

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## PREFACE

The book “Vairāgya Sandipani” was penned by the renowned saint-philosopher-poet of India, Goswami Tulsidas (birth: Samvat 1589, corresponding to 1532 A.D; death: Samvat 1680, corresponding to A.D. 1623) roughly between Samvat 1626 and 1627 (A.D. 1569-70).

The name of the Book has two words—viz. ‘Vairāgya’ and ‘Sandipani’. The first word “Vairāgya” literally means renunciation of the material charms and temptations of the gross mortal world, to develop natural detachment and dispassion for all the sense objects of material world, and distance oneself from the natural inclinations of the gross organs of perception of the body that tend to draw the Jiva (the living being; the creature) away from the natural peace and bliss that is inherent to his or her Atma (the soul; the inner and the true ‘conscious self’), and instead getting him or her entangled in the world of grossness that never give abiding peace and happiness.

The second word “Sandipani” means something that kindles or arouses or ignites or motivates.

Therefore, the main idea expressed in this Book is how one can easily kindle a sense of renunciation from the false charms of the materialistic world that never allows rest and peace to the living being, and keeps him or her perpetually unhappy and unfulfilled. The reward of such wisdom and enlightenment is attainment of eternal sense of spiritual bliss, peace, happiness, beatitude and felicity.

To achieve this noble objective, the great poet-saint Tulsidas has advised the Jiva first to have deep devotion and faith in Lord God (who for Tulsidas is “Lord Ram”, a personified form of the Supreme Being), and then to closely observe the noble and auspicious qualities, characters, deeds and lifestyles of true saints (and not imposters), the way they live and handle different circumstances of life, observe their thinking processes and the calmness of their demeanours, and see how they are so happy and blissful inspite of living in the same world of problems and miseries in which the observer himself lives and seeks succour for his own problems and sorrows.

To wit, when the observer sees truly saintly persons living a happy life of contentedness and bliss inspite of lacking material comforts and external things of the material world that a man thinks give pleasure and happiness, he is motivated to investigate its reason. He deduces that true and abiding happiness, joy, bliss and peace, which is the object of all human endeavours, is not to be found in the outside world, but somewhere else. This observation inspires a wise and intelligent observer to follow the example of these saintly men so that he too can derive the same happiness, joy, bliss and peace. He slowly begins to realise the futility of worldly pursuit, and sees the wisdom in renouncing all pretensions of being happy by worldly indulgences because internally he isn't happy a bit. That is to say, he develops 'Vairagya'; he develops detachment for the external world of false happiness and charm, and instead determines for himself that he would do favour to himself if he now onwards follows the path that would give him lasting peace and happiness; peace and happiness that is not illusionary, but one that is real and rewarding.

And how is this Vairagya kindled in his heart and innerself? It is done by the company of saints who practice and demonstrate this eclectic virtue in their own lives. It is in this company of saints and truly holy people that the seeker learns about this path, both by personal observation and also by listening the the talks and discourses of these wise and self-realised saints, asking them for clarifications and removal of doubts and confusions, and following in their footsteps to gain the same spiritual reward that they have accessed.

Obviously, with a living example of a true saint to guide a person on his spiritual quest, the path becomes easy for him or her. This is the main thrust of this Book "Vairāgya Sandipani", and this is its main objective.

Our present Book has 3 Chapters as follows:

Chapter 1 has the full Original Text of 'Vairāgya Sandipani' that is followed by verse-by-verse Roman Transliteration, and then an easy flowing rendering in English that is aided with notes wherever necessary. There are a total of 62 verses.

Chapters 2 and 3 are meant to further elaborate and elucidate on the original text of **Vairāgya Sandipani** by quoting from one of Tulsidas' great masterpiece, the epic called 'Ram Charit Manas' which is not only a detailed narration of the life and time of Lord Ram that is commonly known as the Ramayan, but a virtual summarized treatise on the fundamental principles of scriptures related to all the aspects of Dharma (righteousness, probity, propriety, noble and virtuous conduct and thought), on Spiritualism, and on a Holy and Divine way of Life.

Chapter 2 is titled "The Auspicious Virtues and Noble Characters of Saints". It is intended, as stated above, to elaborate on the first aspect of the main theme of this Book, which is to tell about the exemplary virtues of true saints so that by following their example or by inculcating their virtues one can become truly pious and saintly.

Chapter 3 is titled "The Attainment of Spiritual Bliss, Peace and Beatitude". This is the reward or the fruit of practicing the principles outlined in the earlier Chapters 1 and 2.

In practical terms the Book “Vairāgya Sandipani” refers to the way a wise and awakened person begins to think and look at the world once a deep sense of self-realisation and complete surrender towards the Lord God sprouts in his heart. Since Lord Ram is the only revered deity whom Tulsidas worships and adores, and to whom he has surrendered himself completely, each and every verse is addressed to Lord Ram in this book.

The two main themes covered in Vairāgya Sandipani are: (i) Attributes of True Saints, and (ii) Attainment of spiritual Peace and Bliss.

Finally, I owe a lot of thanks to Sri Somil Bharti ji who has done the Roman Transliteration of the original text for me. Lord Ram bless him and give him peace in his life.

I offer this humble effort of mine in the form of an English rendering of “Vairāgya Sandipani” at the feet of my beloved Lord Sri Ram, with no other expectation except to see a smile of grace on the Lord’s face. And sure enough this smile is already on the Lord’s lips, and being His beloved son I do feel blessed and fulfilled. Nothing more, whatsoever, is that I desire.

Amen!!

Date: 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2016

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## CHAPTER 1

‘Invocation & Description of God’s Attributes’

1. दोहा- राम बाम दिसि जानकी, लखन दाहिनी ओर।  
ध्यान सकल कल्याणमय, सुरतरु तुलसी तोर।।

1. dōhā- rāma bāma disi jānakī, lakhana dāhinī ōra.  
dhyāna sakala kalyānamaya, surataru tulasī tōra..

Lord Sri Ram has (his consort) Janki (Sita, the daughter of king Janak) on his left, and (his brother) Sri Laxman on his right—such a divine vision of the Lord is ideal for the welfare of a living being, for his all-round well-being, both in terms of the temporal world as well as for spiritual world.

Tulsidas says that for him, this (such a divine and auspicious vision) is an all wish-fulfilling tree (the mythical Wish-Tree of Gods in the Paradise; the “surataru”).  
[1]

2. तुलसी मिटै न मोह तम, किँ कोटि गुन ग्राम।  
हृदय कमल फूलै नहीं, बिनु रबि-कुल-रबि राम।।

2. tulasī miṭai na mōha tama, ki'ēm' kōṭi guna grāma.  
hr̥daya kamala phūlai nahīm, binu rabi-kula-rabi rāma..

Tulsidas says that despite imbibing numerous virtuous qualities, the darkness of ignorance that shadows one’s heart and inner-self cannot be removed, nor can the lotus-heart bloom (i.e. the divine spark of self-realisation, or awareness of the pure consciousness be brought to the fore) without (having devotion for, and seeking the blessing and grace of) Lord Ram who is like the Sun in the Solar-Race (i.e. Lord Ram is the supreme fount of divinity, illuminates the inner-self of the devotee and removes



the gloom of darkness that robes his inner peace and happiness just as the sun in the sky removes the darkness of the world, and with it the fear of ghosts). [2]

[Here, Tulsidas has compared Lord Ram to the ‘sun’. The sun is the most splendid and brilliant entity in the sky, and when it rises, all other sources of light fade away in its presence. The sun immediately eliminates darkness, and with it vanish all fear of ghosts and phantoms. To wit, as soon as devotion for Lord Ram sprouts in the heart of a person, all traces of gloom and worries vanish, and the devotee feels spiritually reassured and comforted. For in all sooth he has a powerful protector and benefactor to take care of him. It gives him inner peace and a sense of confidence to face the tumult of the world.

The emphasis here is on two points: (i) Total surrender to God by the devotee so that the latter benefits from the Lord’s benevolent nature because he goes out of his ways to give succour and solace to his devotees. And (ii) to invoke the Lord’s grace and mercy through surrender and devotion so as to be able to overcome one’s spiritual fear which is like being afraid of ghosts in the darkness of night, because it is not possible to realize this goal without the Lord’s grace and benevolence.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precedes Doha no. 116.]

3. सुनत लखत श्रुति नयन बिनु, रसना बिनु रस लेत।  
बास नासिका बिनु लहै, परसै बिना निकेत।।

3. sunata lakhata śruti nayana binu, rasanā binu rasa lēta.  
bāsa nāsikā binu lahai, parasai binā nikēta..

He (the supreme Lord God) hears without ears, sees without eyes, tastes without tongue, smells (breathes) without nose, and touches (feels) without skin (a gross body). [3]

[This is the cosmic, all-pervading, all-encompassing, invisible but immanent form of the Supreme Being.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precedes Doha no. 118.]

4. सो०- अज अद्वैत अनाम, अलख रूप-गुन-रहित जो।  
माया पति सोइ राम, दास हेतु नर-तनु-धरेउ।।

4. sōraṭhā- aja advaita anāma, alakha rūpa-guna-rahita jō.  
māyā pati sō'i rāma, dāsa hētu nara-tanu-dharē'u..

Forsooth and without gainsay, The Lord (Sri Ram) who is primarily without a birth (“aja”; as he is eternal and imperishable; is unborn), is without a second (“advaita”; i.e. is non-dual and incomparable), is nameless (“anāma”; because he is formless, universal, sublime, subtle, all-pervading and omnipresent, and not limited to any specific criterion), is invisible (“alakha”; i.e. cannot be seen by the eye which is the gross organ of sight in the body, because the Lord’s primary form is ‘pure

Consciousness' which is extremely subtle and sublime), is without form and qualities ("rūpa-guna-rahita"; i.e. he is attribute-less; a cosmic entity that has no form or name; is universal and invisible; an entity that is therefore called "Nirguna"), and is the Lord of Maya ("māyā pati"; one who controls worldly delusions)—verily, it is this Lord God who has revealed himself in a human form with the name of 'Ram', and he did it for the benefit of his devotees and those who have surrendered themselves before the Lord. {This visible form of the Supreme Lord of creation is called his 'Saguna form'.} [5]

[Note- Stanzas nos. 3 and 4 bridge the gap between the Form-less and Formed variants of the same Supreme Being.

Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precedes Doha no. 116; (ii) Doha no. 118; (b) Kavitawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 129.]

5. तुलसी यह तनु खेत है, मन बच कर्म किसान।  
पाप-पुन्य द्वै बीज हैं, बवै सो लवै निदान।।

5. tulasī yaha tanu khēta hai, mana baca karma kisāna.  
pāpa-pun'ya dvai bīja hairṁ, bavai sō lavai nidāna..

Tulsidas says that this gross body is like a farmer's field. The Mana (mind and heart), the Spoken Word (baca) and one's Karma (activities or deeds) are the three symbolic farmers.

The bad and good deeds that a person does in his life are like the two types of seeds that are sown in this field. Naturally therefore, the farmer's harvest would depend on the type of seeds sown by him. [That is, he gets to reap what he has sown.] [5]

[An exactly similar idea is expressed in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 92.

In this verse of Vairagya Sandipani, the body of a living being is likened to a farmer's. Just like a farmer reaps what he sows, a living being gets rewards or punishments in his life depending respectively upon the good and meritorious deeds that he has done on the one hand, or deeds that are evil and unrighteous on the other hand.

The destiny of a person is decided by three primary drivers—the mind and heart, the things one says, and one's deeds and actions. All of them work in close coordination with each other. What the mind and heart directs, the body does accordingly—whether it is in the form of what one says, or in the form of what one does and how one acts. They have a direct bearing upon the person's future and well-being. For instance, even though a man may be very intelligent and wise but if he utters something wrong, albeit inadvertently, he gets a bad name and rebuke. Take another instance—if a man is not too intelligent and wise himself but obeys his teacher who is wise, then he comes to get a good name and reputation because his actions and deeds would be right and acceptable.

Like a wise farmer who takes care of the type of seeds that he sows, selecting the best ones in order to get the best produce of the desired crop, and then remains vigilant throughout the period of cultivation and harvesting of the crop, a wise man is

always careful of the deeds he does, and uses his mind, words and actions in a judicious manner so that his objectives in life are achieved in the best and the easiest way possible.]

6. तुलसी यह तनु तवा है, तपत सदा त्रैताप ।  
सांति होइ जब सांतिपद, पावै राम प्रताप ॥

6. tulasī yaha tanu tavā hai, tapata sadā traitāpa.  
sānti hō'i jaba sāntipada, pāvai rāma pratāpa..

Tulsidas says that this gross body is like a baking-pan (a 'tavā') for a living being. It is constantly heated (tormented and troubled at all times) by the burning fire symbolised by the three legendary tormentors of creation (traitāpa)<sup>1</sup>.

Peace and relief from this misery is obtained by a living being only when one attains the 'Shanti-Pad' (sāntipada)<sup>2</sup>—which is a state of existence that is graced by eternal spiritual peace and bliss, but which is attainable only by the grace of Lord Ram and is symbolised by having devotion in the Lord's holy feet. [6]

[<sup>1</sup>The 3 Traitāpa are the following:— (i) Adhyatmik—torments related to one's spiritual well-being, (ii) Adhibhautik—torments related to one's life in this mortal, mundane world, and his interaction with its inhabitants, and (iii) Adhidaivik—torments created by malignant, angry or opposed stars and gods that result in natural calamities and other obstacles that are beyond one's control.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no.

21.

<sup>2</sup>The "Shanti Pad" is described in verse nos. 43—62 herein below, as well as in Chapter no. 3 of this Book 'Vairagya Sandipani'.]

7. तुलसी बेद-पुरान-मत, पूरन सास्त्र बिचार ।  
यह बिराग-संदीपनी, अखिल ग्यानको सार ॥

7. tulasī bēda-purāna-mata, pūrana sāstra bicāra.  
yaha birāga-sandīpanī, akhila gyānakō sāra..

Tulsidas says that this book 'Vairagya Sandipani' contains the main principles and essential tenets of the Vedas and the Purans (i.e. the primary and ancient scriptures), and incorporates a summarised view of all the other Sastras (other scriptures).

In fact, it presents the essence of all spiritual knowledge that they contain and preach, in a language accessible to all. [In this context, refer the next verse no. 8.] [7]



संत-स्वभाव-वर्णन

santa-svabhāva-varṇana

(Attributes of Saints Described)

[The following verse nos. 8—42 describe the noble qualities and excellent virtues of true saints and pious people.

Refer also to: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand: (i) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 2—to Doha no. 3; (ii) Doha no. 6; (iii) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 7; Aranya Kand: Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 45—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 46; Uttar Kand: (i) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 37—to Doha no. 38; (ii) Doha no. 46 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 13-15 and 21 that precede Doha no. 121; (iv) Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 125.

(b) Dohawali, verse nos. 375—378, 381.

(c) Vinai Patrika, verse no. 57.

All the above verses are included in this our book in Chapter no. 2.]

8. दोहा- सरल बरन भाषा सरल, सरल अर्थमय मानि।  
तुलसी सरलै संतजन, ताहि परी पहिचानि॥

8. dōhā- sarala barana bhāṣā sarala, sarala arthamaya māni.  
tulasī saralai santajana, tāhi parī pahicāni..

It (Vairagya Sandipani) has simple words and language, and its meaning is simple and straight forward.

Tulsidas says that saints of a pure and simple heart can easily understand it. [To wit, it is easily comprehensible by true saints and pious people as they not only practice its teachings in their lives but also experience the spiritual rewards it says one gets by inculcating the glorious virtues that saints possess.] [8]

9. चौ०- अति सीतल अति ही सुखदाई । सम दम राम भजन अधिकाई॥  
जड़ जीवन कौं करै सचेता। जग महुँ बिचरत है एहि हेता॥

9. caupā'i- ati sītala ati hī sukhadā'ī. sama dama rāma bhajana adhikā'ī..  
jaṛa jīvana kaurṁ karai sacētā. jaga maham' bicarata hai ēhi hētā..

Saints (those who are of a pious heart, and possess exemplary virtues and excellent characters) are of a calm temperament and full of bliss and tranquillity so much so that their calmness and blissful nature effuses from them to provide peace and bliss to all others who are in their company. [It is like the case of the sun or the moon whose light illuminates everyone in the world, uniformly and without distinction.]

They have not only conquered the vagrant mind and heart (the Mana) but have also controlled their sense organs of perception and action<sup>1</sup> in an exemplary manner.

Not only this, their chief attribute is that they have developed natural sense of

devotion for Lord Ram, and have surrendered themselves before the Lord completely.

They are engaged in enlightening the ignorant people about the reality and truth of life and about one's spiritual well-being, and it is for this purpose that they continue to live and roam in this world so that they can spread the light of spiritual wisdom and to remove the darkness of utter ignorance and delusions which have engulfed the world at large. [9]

[<sup>1</sup>There are five organs of perception such as the ears, nose, tongue, eyes and skin; and five organs of action such as the hands, legs, mouth, genitals and excretory.]

10. दोहा- तुलसी ऐसे कहूँ कहूँ, धन्य धरनि वह संत।  
परकाजे परमारथी, प्रीति लिये निबहंत।।

10. dōhā- tulasī aisē kahūṁ kahūṁ, dhan'ya dharani vaha santa.  
parakājē paramārathī, prīti liyē nibahanta..

Tulsidas says that such saints (as described above in verse no. 9) are rare in this world, and that land where such saints are present is indeed very fortunate and blessed.

Such saints are ever engrossed in serving others selflessly and helping them in their spiritual quest, and at the same time they themselves relentlessly pursue the path of spiritualism, the path of self-realisation and of self-improvement. [10]

11. की मुख पट दीन्हे रहैं, जथा अर्थ भाषंत।  
तुलसी या संसारमें, सो बिचारजुत संत।।

11. kī mukha paṭa dīnhē rahaiṁ, jathā artha bhāṣanta.  
tulasī yā sansāramēṁ, sō bicārajuta santa..

Tulsidas says that those saints who prefer to keep quiet (do not speak unnecessarily and unwarranted words), and if they have to they speak only the truth, are really wise and honest saints in the true sense of the word. [11]

[In other words, true saints are those who do not say things that the world wants to hear though such things are untrue and detrimental to the spiritual well-being of the creatures. They would prefer to keep quiet rather than trying to please the world by saying pleasing things which are falsehoods. If they speak, they speak only the 'truth', and nothing but the truth.]

12. बोलै बचन बिचारि कै, लीन्हें संत सुभाव।  
तुलसी दुख दुर्बचन के, पंथ देत नहिं पाँव।।

12. bōlai bacana bicāri kai, līnhēṁ santa subhāva.  
tulasī dukha durbacana kē, pantha dēta nahim pāmva..

Such saints think wisely before speaking, and have acquired the temperament (mental bearing) of a truly pious soul.

Tulsidas says that they neither hurt anyone's feelings or sentiments, nor speak ill-will of others. [12]

13. सत्रु न काहू करि गनै, मित्र गनै नहिं काहि।  
तुलसी यह मत संतको, बोलै समता माहि॥

13. satru na kāhū kari ganai, mitra ganai nahim kāhi.  
tulasī yaha mata santakō, bōlai samatā māhi..

He (such great saints) neither treats anyone as an enemy nor as a friend—i.e. all the Jivas, the living beings, are equal in his eyes.

Tulsidas says that it is the basic principle of a saint that he treats everyone equally and with equanimity. [13]

[That is, he treats all with parity; he practices the eclectic principles of equanimity, equality, dispassion and fortitude in his life; he treats everyone equally and with the same affection in his heart; he does not distinguish between two or more persons based on caste, colour, creed, religion, etc. And what is the reason for this? It is because he sees the same 'Atma' or soul in each living being; he does know that the external body is not the creature's true identity, but only a vehicle that carries the Atma. And this 'Atma' is nothing but 'pure consciousness' which in itself is a holy, divine, sublime and subtle entity that is pure and un-corrupt.]

14. चौ०-अति अनन्यगति इंद्रि जीता। जाको हरि बिनु कतहुँ न चीता॥  
मृग तृष्णा सम जग जिय जानी। तुलसी ताहि संत पहिचानी॥

14. caupā'i- ati anan'yagati indrī jītā. jākō hari binu katahum' na cītā..  
mr̥ga tr̥ṣṇā sama jaga jiya jānī. tulasī tāhi santa pahicānī..

He who has become one with the Supreme Being (i.e. who is totally devoted and surrendered to God, who remains constantly submerged in the thoughts of the Lord; who has attained a state of transcendental existence when his 'self' identifies itself with the supreme Self that is eternal and infinite—"anan'yagati"), he who has conquered his sense organs (i.e. who practices self-control over his organs of perception and action, and does not fall in their temptations—"indrī jītā"), he whose mind-intellect complex is concentrated on Lord Hari (the Supreme Being; Lord God symbolised by Lord Vishnu and his incarnation of Lord Ram) and finds no charm anywhere else (i.e. he whose mind is devoted to the Lord and finds no substance in the gross mundane world—"jākō hari binu katahum' na cītā"), and he who knows that this world is simply a mirage (i.e. illusionary and transient—"mr̥ga tr̥ṣṇā sama jaga jiya jānī")—verily, Tulsidas says that such a man should be recognised as a true and pious saint. [14]

15. एक भरोसो एक बल, एक आस बिस्वास ।  
रामरूप स्वाती जलद, चातक तुलसीदास ॥

15. ēka bharōsō ēka bala, ēka āsa bisvāsa.  
rāmarūpa svātī jalada, cātaka tulasīdāsa..

Tulsidas says that the real saints are those who (i) rely and depend only upon Lord Ram and no one else whomsoever (ēka bharōsō), (ii) have only one strength, authority, power and support (in the form of Lord Ram—“ēka bala”), (iii) have only one source (of Lord Ram) from whom to expect anything whatsoever (ēka āsa), (iv) are firm in their faith, belief and conviction (bisvāsa), and (v) for whom the Lord God's incarnation in the divine physical form of Lord Sri Ram is like a dark rain-bearing cloud of the ‘Swati Nakshatra’ (rāmarūpa svātī jalada) while they regard themselves as the famed bird known as ‘Cātaka’ (which keeps its gaze fixed on this cloud because it loves the cloud very much and seeks a drop of rain-water directly from the cloud to quench its thirst)<sup>1</sup>. [15]

[Note—<sup>1</sup>The bird Chatak (sparrow hawk; a cuckoo) has a legendary reputation that it drinks rain-drops that fall directly into its beak from the cloud, and would prefer to die due to thirst if the rain-drops fail to fall in its mouth rather than drink water from any other source to survive. The Chatak is so enamoured of the cloud that it keeps its gaze fixed on the latter in the hope that the cloud will oblige it. And the cloud reciprocates the bird's love for it because it is believed that the first drops of rain that fall from the cloud reach the bird's beak before it touches the earth.

This metaphor means that true saints are those who do not seek anything from this world, and rely solely upon their beloved Lord Ram for all their needs—temporal as well as spiritual. Such saints are like Chakor who would prefer to die of thirst rather than compromise its love and devotion for the cloud.

The metaphysical meaning of this verse is that this bird Chatak does not wish to pollute its inner-self by drinking polluted water from the surrounding world, but is determined to drink rain drops falling directly in its beak from the cloud as it is the purest form of water falling from the heavens. Similarly, a true saint and holy person would not pollute the purity of his Atma or soul or his inner-self by allowing himself to get attracted to this mundane gross world and its delusory charms, but rather focuses his attention on his ‘true self’ which is an image of the ‘supreme Self’ represented by Lord Ram. He would therefore not seek anything from others who are themselves polluted, but prefer to ask the Lord because he is purity personified as well as the ‘parent of the individual's Atma’, being the ‘Supreme Atma’ or Parmatma. It is like a child asking its own parent for whatever it needs, instead of asking from a neighbour or even any other member of the family.]

16. सो जन जगत जहाज है, जाके राग न दोष ।  
तुलसी तृष्णा त्यागि कै, गहै सील संतोष ॥

16. sō jana jagata jahāja hai, jākē rāga na dōṣa.  
tulasī trṣṇā tyāgi kai, gahai sīla santōṣa..

Tulsidas says that those who have no attachment or infatuation with anything related to this world (*rāga*), who do not harbour any kind of ill-will, malice and jealousy towards anyone nor see faults in others (*na dōṣa*), and who have renounced desires, greed and rapacity for the material things of the world and overcome the natural tendency of the sense organs to seek gratification (*trṣṇā tyāgi kai*), and have instead inculcated the noble virtues of modesty, politeness, courteousness, and decorum in their behaviour and conduct (*sīla*) as well as an exemplary degree of contentedness with whatever is available to them instead of perpetually remaining unsatisfied and hankering for more (*santōṣa*)—verily, such noble persons are like a ship that can take other ordinary people across the world which is like a vast ocean that would be otherwise difficult to cross.

[That is, those who follow the example of saints with the above characters are easily able to cross over this mundane existence of grossness in this world that is marked by an interminable chain of sorrows and grief and frustrations that come in the wake of endless desires and quest for more, and instead reach a state of existence that is characterised by perpetual sense of peace, happiness and bliss.] [16]

17. सील गहनि सब की सहनि, कहनि हीय मुख राम।  
तुलसी रहिए एहि रहनि, संत जनन को काम॥

17. *sīla gahani saba kī sahani, kahani hīya mukha rāma.*  
*tulasī rahi'ē ēhi rahani, santa janana kō kāma..*

According to Tulsidas, true saints practice the principles of courteous and polite behaviour in their day-to-day life, and strive to inculcate or develop good qualities in themselves whenever they come to see such qualities in others (*sīla gahani*). They practice tolerance and fortitude by politely accepting whatever treatment is given to them by others, without feeling hurt themselves or seeking revenge or retribution for bad behaviour of others towards them (*saba kī sahani*).

At all times in their lives, they remember Lord Ram in their hearts and speak of the Lord's glories and divine stories through their mouths (*kahani hīya mukha rāma*).

For in all sooth Tulsidas asserts that this is the true way a saint should live his life.

[In other words, true saints are those who are always submerged in the thoughts of the Lord and never allow either their heart or their mind to harbour any other thoughts. At the same time, they use their tongue and mouth to praise the Lord and sing his divine glories as a means to purify their inner-self as well as the world outside. Even if others say nasty things about them, they do not pay heed to them, and instead of polluting their tongue by cursing their opponents and detractors they say the holy name of Lord Ram—as this has a positive effect on them as well as their opponents in the long run, for the latter regret their impertinence and feel sorry while the former is able to maintain his peace and calm.] [17]

18. निज संगी निज सम करत, दुरजन मन दुख दून।  
मलयाचल है संतजन, तुलसी दोष बिहून॥



18. nija saṅgī nija sama karata, durajana mana dukha dūna.  
malayācala hai santajana, tulasī dōṣa bihūna..

Saints convert those who accompany them in their own likeness (i.e. those who stay in contact with pious souls acquire eclectic spiritual virtues themselves by the virtue of constant contact with the former), but they double (i.e. increase as much as twice) the anger and jealousy of their adversaries and opponents (because these evil people do not like the respect and honour saints get from the world, and also because these saints' good advices to others hinder and create obstacles to the nefarious designs of evil people who wish to mislead the world and cheat it for their own vested interests).

[In other words, those who are of a noble and righteous temperament find joy and happiness in the company of saints because their souls find compatibility with each other. On the other hands, those who are wicked and evil at heart, find saints like thorns in their back, because the latter act as barriers against evil designs of the former. It is like the simple case of an ordinary citizen finding comfort when a policeman is round the corner, while a thief will begin to squirm at the sight of the guardian of law.]

Tulsidas says that despite all the provocations from non-saints, true saints remain calm and poised, without being affected by any of the faults that are incumbent on contact with non-saints (evil persons) even as the Malayachal (Chandan/sandal-wood) always remains cool no matter how hard it is rubbed.

[To produce a paste from sandal-wood, its two pieces are rubbed against each other vigorously with water being sprinkled occasionally to dissolve the powder produced by such rubbing. But inspite of this vigorous rubbing, the sandal-wood always feels cool when touched. This metaphor, when applied to saints, means that no matter how much insult is inflicted upon them by their adversaries, no matter how harsh they are treated by others, they still remain calm, smiling and forgiving.] [18]

19. कोमल बानी संत की, स्रवत अमृतमय आइ।  
तुलसी ताहि कठोर मन, सुनत मैं होइ जाइ॥

19. kōmala bānī santa kī, sravata amṛtamaya ā'i.  
tulasī tāhi kaṭhōra mana, sunata maina hō'i jā'i..

The word of a saint is so sweet, pleasant and affable that it appears to be like a drop of sweet nectar. [Saints are soft-spoken by nature; they speak sweetly and in a pleasant tone; they never use harsh and angry words.]

Tulsidas says that even a hardened heart becomes malleable and soft (like wax) on hearing such words (said by a saint). [19]

[Compare this observation with verse no. 18 wherein it is said that wicked people are inclined to use harsh words against saints. Inspite of all the provocations, saints speak sweetly, and their words never offend anyone.]

20. अनुभव सुख उत्पत्ति करत, भय-भ्रम धरै उठाइ।  
ऐसी बानी संत की, जो उर भेदै आइ॥

20. anubhava sukha utapati karata, bhaya-bhrama dharai uṭhā'i.  
aisī bānī santa kī, jō ura bhēdai ā'i..

The words of a saint are such that they produce a feeling that comes with self-realisation and experiencing of the truth on the one hand (anubhava sukha utapati karata), and remove or eliminate the fear caused by ignorance and delusions on the other hand (bhaya-bhrama dharai uṭhā'i).

The words of a saint have such powerful effect and force that they can penetrate deep into the heart of the listener and rupture all sorts of hardened knots that cling to his heart (jō ura bhēdai ā'i), knots that symbolise well-entrenched confusions, delusions and ignorance that the person has been harbouring since ages.

[In other words, whatever a true saint says helps a person who hears them to overcome his ignorance and fears that are inherent in worldly delusions. The result is attainment of peace, happiness, contentedness and spiritual bliss. Words of a saint help a person to obtain knowledge of the Truth, which in turn helps him to overcome all sorts of problems created by falsehoods.] [20]

21. सीतल बानी संत की, ससिहू ते अनुमान।  
तुलसी कोटि तपन हरै, जो कोउ धारै कान॥

21. sītala bānī santa kī, sasihū tē anumāna.  
tulasī kōṭi tapana harai, jō kō'u dhārai kāna..

The cool and soothing words of a saint are far superior to these virtues inherent in the light of the moon.

[The moonlight is traditionally believed to be very cool and soothing for the nerves. But this soothing effect of the moon's light is limited only to the physical gross body of the creature. On the other hand, the sweet words of a true saint have a spiritual dimension to them and they go deep down to have a soothing effect on his agitated heart. Whereas the moon's light has only a transient benefit, the words of a saint have a lasting effect on the person, affecting his inner-self in a subtle way that helps to heal him from within.]

Tulsidas says that those who hear these rejuvenating words of saints and keep them stored in their ears (i.e. go on hearing them repeatedly), are sure to get rid of immense sufferings that they suffer from.

[The ear is the medium by which the creature hears anything in this world. All the things that he hears are related to this deluding world which is selfish and exploitative. No one speaks about the welfare and self-interest of the creature. A time comes when the creature feels fed-up of hearing selfish things and advices that tend to exploit him to serve the world. So he begins to long for someone who will think of him and tell him something that would be of benefit for him.

The words of saints meet the creature's spiritual as well as temporal needs as they speak the truth and show him the path that would give him real peace and happiness instead of artificial ones that are short-lived, and which would help him to serve his own needs instead of the selfish needs of the world.] [21]

22. चौ०- पाप ताप सब सूल नसावै। मोह अंध रबि बचन बहावै॥  
तुलसी ऐसे सदगुन साधू। बेद मध्य गुन बिदित अगाधू॥

22. caupāī-pāpa tāpa saba sūla nasāvai. mōha andha rabi bacana bahāvai..  
tulasī aisē sadaguna sādihū. bēda madhya guna bidita agādhū..

Saints destroys all types of sins, sufferings and agonies (of others who come in contact with them).

Their words spread like the rays of the sun removing the darkness of ignorance.

Tulsidas says that saints have abundance of good qualities in them, and these virtues have been lauded and described as well as made famous by the Vedas (the holy primary scriptures). [22]

23. दोहा— तन करि मन करि बचन करि, काहू दूखत नाहिं।  
तुलसी ऐसे संतजन, रामरूप जग माहि॥

23. dōhā-tana kari mana kari bacana kari, kāhū dūkhata nāhiṁ.  
tulasī aisē santajana, rāmarūpa jaga māhi..

Tulsidas says that he who never hurts anyone in anyway whatsoever, either by his body (i.e. by his deeds and actions), by his mind (evil thoughts and use of the mind to plan harm of others) or by his words (i.e. spoken as well as written word)—such persons are said to be living embodiments of Lord Ram in this world.

[That is, such a person who does not allow himself to hurt or harm others in anyway is a personified form of the Lord who is forgiving, loving, caring, friendly and warm towards all the living beings of this creation. No one ever fears the Lord; he loves the entire creation equally and is the supreme Father of all. Just like a child never fears his parent, the creature never fears the Lord. If a person inculcates this virtue of love and compassion for all then naturally he acquires the virtues of the Lord himself, and therefore represents the Lord in this physical world that is otherwise torn asunder by strife, jealousy, hatred, selfishness, ego and greed. The emphasis in this verse is on the eclectic principle of ‘non-violence’.

Indirectly, this verse lauds the glory of Lord Ram as one who loves all living beings equally, and the Lord takes care that he does not become a source of pain and grief to others. On the contrary, being the Supreme Lord of creation, it becomes obligatory for Lord Ram to take care of all the creatures of this creation like a parent takes care of his or her off spring, and ensure that if any one of them finds himself alone and forsaken then he must be assured that there is someone who actually loves him so much so that this dejected person should never feel lonely and abandoned.] [23]

24. मुख दीखत पातक हरै, परसत कर्म बिलाहिं।  
बचन सुनत मन मोहगत, पूरब भाग मिलाहिं॥

24. mukha dīkhata pātaka harai, parasata karma bilāhiṁ.  
bacana sunata mana mōhagata, pūraba bhāga milāhiṁ..

It is rare and very fortunate for a person to find a true saint, for in all sooth, by seeing and meeting such a saint, a number of benefits are got: (i) a person's sins and their horrible consequences are automatically neutralised by this interaction (*mukha dīkhata pātaka harai*); (ii) the mere touch of such saints (i.e. by their communion and company) all the Karmas of the person (i.e. the aggregated affects of a person's past deeds and actions) are dissipated (*parasata karma bilāhiṁ*); and (iii) by hearing the enlightening and wise words of such saints, all the Moha (ignorance, confusions, distractions and delusions) that were so far present in a person's heart are removed for good (*bacana sunata mana mōhagata*).

Verily, it is the result of extremely good luck that a person comes in contact with such saints (whose virtues, characters and qualities are being enumerated in this Book 'Vairagya Sandipani'). [24]

25. अति कोमल अरु बिमल रुचि, मानस में मल नाहिं ।  
तुलसी रत मन होइ रहै, अपने साहिब माहिं ॥

25. ati kōmala aru bimala ruci, mānasa mēm̐ mala nāhiṁ.  
tulasī rata mana hō'i rahai, apanē sāhiba māhiṁ..

Saints are characterised by having wishes or desires—if they have any wish or desire at all in the first place—that are tender by nature and spotless (i.e. free from any sort of worldly taints and vested interests—"ati kōmala aru bimala ruci").

Their heart and mind are absolutely pure and free from any sort of corruptions, deceit, pretensions, polluting thoughts and ideas (*mānasa mēm̐ mala nāhiṁ*).

Tulsidas says that they are always engrossed in the thoughts of their Lord ("rata mana hō'i rahai, apanē sāhiba māhiṁ"; i.e. they remain submerged in the bliss obtained in their heart by meditating upon Lord Ram, the Lord God of creation, the Lord whom such saints regard as their revered deity). [25]

26. जाके मन ते उठि गई, तिल-तिल तृष्णा चाहि।  
मनसा बाचा कर्मना, तुलसी बंदत ताहि॥

26. jākē mana tē uṭhi ga'ī, tila-tila tṛṣṇā cāhi.  
manasā bācā karmanā, tulasī bandata tāhi..

Tulsidas says that he offers great homage from the depth of his heart (*manasā*) as well as with his words (*bācā*) and actions (*karmanā*) to those (saints) from whose hearts even the smallest speck of worldly desires and attachments (*tila-tila tṛṣṇā cāhi*) have been completely eliminated (*mana tē uṭhi ga'ī*)<sup>1</sup>. [26]

[<sup>1</sup>This verse can be read and interpreted in another way as follows: "Tulsidas bows before and gives his deep respects to such persons (i.e. saints) who have completely eliminated all desires and attachments for this material world of sense objects, and have developed total detachment and dispassion from them, never

greeding for them or get tempted by them, and this eclectic state of renunciation sprouts from their inner-self, their ‘Mana’ (‘*manasā*’; i.e. their mind and heart), and is exhibited in what they speak (*bācā*) and in all their actions (*karmanā*).”

It is but natural for all living beings to harbour some desire for enjoyment of the material things of the world that tend to appease one’s sense organs, and to find some sort of attachment with such things which give joy to the senses. To be a totally dispassionate and neutral towards them is very difficult thing to practice. Here Tulsidas stresses the importance of the virtue of renunciation and detachment from the gross world of sense objects and its various temptations.]

27. कंचन काँचहि सम गनै, कामिनि काष्ठ पषान।  
तुलसी ऐसे संतजन, पृथ्वी ब्रह्म समान॥

27. *kañcana kāmcahi sama ganai, kāmīni kāṣṭha paṣāna.*  
*tulasī aisē santajana, pṛthvī brahma samāna..*

Those saints who (i) see no difference between gold and glass (i.e. who practice exemplary renunciation and detachment from the material world so much so that a valuable piece of gold has no greater value for them than a worthless piece of glass because they have overcome all worldly desires and greed for material things), and (ii) those who regard vivacious women as statues made of wood or stone (i.e. those who have overcome their natural sexual instincts and lustfulness that drives an ordinary person insane at times and forces him to fall in a vicious snare of attachments and infatuations with a female for satisfying his lust for sexual pleasures)—Tulsidas says that such saints are no less than an image of the Supreme Being known as Brahm himself on this earth. [27]

[That is to say, such saints are venerable for all, and one can freely approach them with female members of their families, something that is constant a source of apprehension in the minds of men. Even individual females can be freely approach and serve such exalted saints without any fear or apprehension.

Tulsidas stresses the importance of two eclectic spiritual qualities here—(i) complete renunciation from the material world and its artificial attractions that lead to greed, lust and rapacity—symbolised by treating ‘gold’ and ‘glass’ equally; and (ii) practice of celibacy and abstinence from sexual indulgences which in effect means an overall control of one’s sense organs and their natural instincts—symbolised by them not being sexually attracted to a female.

Remember: There is no insult or insinuation meant for females here. The intention is that sexual urges are more often than not the cause of one’s ruin, and moral degradation and fall from grace. Once one falls in this ‘honey trap’, it is well nigh impossible for him to extricate himself from it.

Refer verse nos. 28 and 31 below also in this context.]

28. चौ०— कंचन को मृत्तिका करि मानत। कामिनि काष्ठ सिला पहिचानत॥  
तुलसी भूलि गयो रस एहा। ते जन प्रगट राम की देहा॥

28. caupā'ī-kañcana kō mṛṭikā kari mānata. kāmīni kāṣṭha silā pahicānata..  
tulasī bhūli gayō rasa ēhā. tē jana pragaṭa rāma kī dēhā..

Those (saints) who regard gold of being as worthlessness as mud (dust), and who recognise (treat) vivacious women as nothing more than a statue of wood—Tulsidas says that they, who have forgotten this charm (of greed and lust), are indeed like an image (visual embodiment) of Lord Ram. [28]

[Note— In this context, refer verse no. 27 above, and verse no. 31 below.

In other words, a person who has overcome his greed and lust on the one hand, and practices renunciation, dispassion and detachment on the other hand becomes as noble and worthy of respect as the Lord himself.]

29. आकिंचन इंद्रिदमन, रमन राम इक तार।  
तुलसी ऐसे संत जन, बिरले या संसार।।

29. ākiñcana indrīdamana, ramana rāma ika tāra.  
tulasī aisē santa jana, biralē yā sansāra..

Tulsidas says that such saints who have no worldly materialistic possessions (ākiñcana), who have fully controlled their sense organs and exercise self restraint on them (indrīdamana), and whose mind is singularly concentrated on Lord Ram without suffering from any distractions as if it was the 'only thread of their lives' (ramana rāma ika tāra)—in all sooth and forsooth, such saints are very rare (to find) in this world. [29]

[The virtues lauded in this verse are: (i) total renunciation and dispossession; (ii) practicing self-control over one's sense organs and their natural tendencies for self-gratification; and (iii) meditating upon Lord Ram, the Supreme Being.]

30. अहंवाद 'मैं' 'तैं' नहीं, दुष्ट संग नहीं कोइ।  
दुख ते दुख नहीं ऊपजै, सुख तैं सुख नहीं होइ।।  
31. सम कंचन काँचै गिनत, सत्रु मित्र सम दोइ।  
तुलसी या संसार में, कहत संत जन सोइ।।

30. ahambāda 'mairṁ' 'tairṁ' nahīṁ, duṣṭa saṅga nahīṁ kō'i.  
dukha tē dukha nahīṁ ūpajai, sukha tairṁ sukha nahīṁ hō'i..

31. sama kañcana kāmīcai ginata, satru mitra sama dō'i.  
tulasī yā sansāra mēm, kahata santa jana sō'i..

[Outlining the grand virtues of true saints, Tulsidas further says—]

(i) Those who do not have any trace of ego and pride (ahambāda), (ii) those who do not distinguish between any two entities, calling one as 'mine' and the other as 'yours' (i.e. those who practice total equanimity and treat everything and everyone alike without any distinction—'mairṁ' 'tairṁ' nahīṁ)<sup>1</sup>, (iii) those who have no evil company nor allow such company near them (duṣṭa saṅga nahīṁ kō'i), (iv) those who are neutral and detached from this world to such an extent that they are not at all

affected by either a favourable circumstance or an adverse situation (*dukha tē dukha nahim ūpajai, sukha taim sukha nahim hō'i*) [30], -----

----- (v) those who regard both gold and glass as equally worthless (because none of them would give them spiritual peace and happiness, and since both of them pertain to the gross material world they are equally useless and disposable for them—“*sama kañcana kāmñcai ginata*”)<sup>2</sup>, and (vi) those for whom both foe and friend are equal (i.e. those who treat everyone alike and therefore don't give a person a favourable treatment because he is a friend, or hate someone because he is an enemy—because they regard their Atma, their pure conscious soul, as their true identity, and not their gross body: “*satru mitra sama dō'i*”)—verily and in all sooth, Tulsidas says such people are called ‘true saints’ in this world [31]. (30-31)

[In these two verses, Tulsidas has listed six qualities of a true saint and pious soul.

<sup>1</sup>Such saints treat everyone alike because they know that a person's true identity is his or her Atma, the ‘pure consciousness’ that is holy and pure entity. The gross body is not the true identity and is tainted by worldly interactions. This body is selfish and is under the control of the sense organs, while the Atma is the fraction of the Supreme Atma known as the ‘Parmatma’ or the Supreme Consciousness. The gross body of the person is perishable as opposed to the Atma which is imperishable.

The material things of this world are all perishable like the body of the creature. So there is no distinction between the two. And since the Atma is the same in all living beings, there is no distinction between them too.

Refer: verse no. 33 also herein below.

<sup>2</sup>Refer: verse nos. 27 and 28 herein above.]

32. बिरले बिरले पाइए, माया त्यागी संत ।  
तुलसी कामी कुटिल कलि, केकी केक अनंत ॥

32. biralē biralē pā'i'ē, māyā tyāgī santa.  
tulasī kāmī kuṭila kali, kēkī kēka ananta..

Tulsidas says that in Kaliyug (the present era of time), true saints who have completely overcome Maya (delusions, ignorance, and all other types of worldly faults) are extremely rare to find. But there is no dearth of those people (non-saints) who are sweet-talking, selfish and back-stabbers much like the peacock and peahen (who gobble up snakes at the first opportunity despite their sweet voice and attractive external features). [32]

[In other words, it is very easy to find false and pretentious saints who are full of cunning and conceit, albeit they behave in such a polished manner that the world is cheated by their tricks and deceitful mannerisms. On the other hand, it is extremely difficult to find a true saint whose glories and virtues are sung and lauded in the scriptures; saints who are true, trust-worthy, realized, illustrious and honourable.

False god-men and con-men masquerading and passing off themselves as ‘saints’ and ‘holy men’ are available at dime a dozen in the present world overridden by immoral attitudes, a world that is full of corruptions and lack of scruples. But true saints whose company provides solace and succour to the soul of the creature are howbeit rare to come across.]

33. मैं तैं मेट्यो मोह तम, उग्यो आतमा भानु।  
संत राज सो जानिये, तुलसी या सहिदानु॥

33. mair̥m tair̥m mētyō mōha tama, ugyō ātamā bhānu.  
santa rāja sō jāniyē, tulasī yā sahidānu..

Those saints who have overcome such gross worldly views as distinguishing between themselves and all other living beings, symbolised by the use of words as ‘me’ and ‘you’, or treating someone as being ‘mine’ and others as ‘they’ (mair̥m tair̥m mōtyō)<sup>1</sup>, from whom the darkness of ignorance that gives rise to the ‘mine-your’ factor has been eliminated (mētyō mōha tama)<sup>2</sup>, and in whose heart the ‘Sun of Knowledge of Self-Realisation’ has risen (which tells them that the true ‘self’ of all living beings is the pure consciousness known as the Atma which is self-illuminated like the ‘sun’; “ugyō ātamā bhānu”)—Tulsidas says that such saints should be recognised as King among saints. [33]

[<sup>1</sup>Refer: verse no. 30 herein above.

<sup>2</sup>See note appended to verse nos. 30-31 herein above.

The best virtues one should seek in a true saint, therefore, are the following: (i) lack of ego and pride, i.e. they should be humble, sincere and unpretentious; (ii) equanimity, neutrality and equality towards all living beings, having no distinction between a friend and foe; and (iii) being self-realised, wise and enlightened.]

संत-महिमा-वर्णन

santa-mahimā-varṇana

(Hymns in Praise of Saints)

34. सो0— को बरनै मुख एक, तुलसी महिमा संत की।  
जिन्ह के बिमल बिबेक, सेस महेस न कहि सकत॥

34. sōraṭhā- kō baranai mukha ēka, tulasī mahimā santa kī.  
jinha kē bimala bibēka, sēsa mahēsa na kahi sakata..

Tulsidas wonders which human being can ever describe, with a single mouth, the multitude of divine virtues, the immensity of glories, the profoundness of spiritual importance, and the great significance of true saints—because even the thousand-hooded mythological Serpent known as ‘Sesh-Nath’ (who has thousand tongues), as well as Lord Maheshwar (the ‘Great Lord God’, i.e. Lord Shiva), who both are steeped in pure wisdom and are all-knowledgable, are unable to do so. [34]

[In other words, the Sesh-nath who has literally a thousand mouths, and Lord Shiva who has five mouths, both of them find themselves unable to sufficiently



describe the glories of saints. Therefore, how can a human being with a single mouth and a limited knowledge ever describe them?

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 3.]

35. दोहा- महि पत्री करि सिंधु मसि, तरु लेखनी बनाइ।  
तुलसी गनपत सौं तदपि, महिमा लिखी न जाइ॥

35. dōhā- mahi patrī kari sindhu masi, taru lēkhanī banā'i.  
tulasī ganapata sōm tadapi, mahimā likhī na jā'i..

Tulsidas says that the importance and significance of true saints are so profound, so measureless and so huge in dimension that their praises cannot be written (described or narrated) even by Lord Ganesh himself on paper as large as the earth, using water of oceans as ink, and the mythological Kalpa Tree (the evergreen tree of Gods) as the pen. [35]

[In other words, the glories of saints are beyond description. No human being can ever successfully describe them in satisfactory manner when even Lord Ganesh, who had written the huge epic Mahabharat and is regarded as the patron deity of writers, is unable to do so with an interminable supply of ink in the form of water of the oceans, and a pen as large and blessed as the huge and evergreen legendary tree of gods that grows in the heaven.]

### The Importance of Devotion for Lord Ram & Faith in the Lord's Holy Name

36. धन्य धन्य माता पिता, धन्य पुत्र बर सोइ।  
तुलसी जो रामहि भजे, जैसेहुँ कैसेहुँ होइ॥

36. dhan'ya dhan'ya mātā pitā, dhan'ya putra bara sō'i.  
tulasī jō rāmahī bhajē, jaisēhum̐ kaisēhum̐ hō'i..

Tulsidas says that not only the parents of a person who has devotion for Lord Ram and worships the Lord in any manner whatsoever are extremely blessed, but their son (i.e. the concerned person) is equally blessed too. [36]

[In other words, if a man has devotion for Lord Ram and worships the Lord sincerely, then he himself as well as his parents and other family members too become blessed and eligible for obtaining the divine grace of the Lord.

Having devotion for Lord God in the form of Lord Ram is the best form of spiritual practice; it is easy to do and makes a person who follows this path very dear to the Lord.

Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 45; (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 79; (iii) Doha no. 84—to Doha no. 85; (iv) Doha no. 122 along with Chaupai line nos. 12-19 that precede it.

(b) Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 21, stanza no. 25.]

37. तुलसी जाके बदन ते, धोखेहुँ निकसत राम ।  
ताके पग की पगतरी, मेरे तन को चाम ॥

37. tulasī jākē badana tē, dhōkhēhum̐ nikasata rāma.  
tākē paga kī pagatarī, mērē tana kō cāma..

Tulsidas says that he will feel honoured if those who utter the holy name of ‘Ram’ even unwittingly, unwillingly and inadvertently, have their footwear made from his (Tulsidas’) hide (skin). [37]

[In other words, Tulsidas says that the holy name of Lord Ram, i.e. the word “RAM”, is so holy and divine and purifying that the person who says it becomes extremely holy and divine himself (like the Lord). As such, Tulsidas says that he would consider himself very lucky if such a holy man ever puts his holy foot on his (Tulsidas’) body. It will be an honour and privilege for Tulsidas if this ever happens.

The idea is to stress on the holiness of Lord Ram’s divine Name, as well as the fact that those who say it become truly blessed and purified.

The glory of Lord Ram’s holy name is extolled in the following books also:

(a) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 19—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 28.

(b) Kavitarali, Uttar Kand, verse nos. 89—93, and 178.

(c) Vinai Patrika, verse nos. 46, 64—70.]

38. तुलसी भगत सुपच भलौ, भजै रैन दिन राम ।  
ऊँचो कुल केहि कामको, जहाँ न हरि को नाम ॥

38. tulasī bhagata supaca bhalau, bhajai raina dina rāma.  
ūm̐cō kula kēhi kāmako, jahām̐ na hari kō nāma..

Tulsidas says that even a lowly man born in some lower rung of society is praiseworthy if he constantly remembers Lord Ram and repeats the Lord’s holy name.

Say, of what use is taking birth in an upper-caste household if one does not have devotion for Lord Ram, or if he does not remember the Lord and his glories. [38]

[The next verse no. 39 further elaborates on this concept by comparing a high caste whose members have no devotion for Lord Ram to a high mountain where poisonous snakes live, and a lowly class whose members have love and devotion for the Lord as the low-lying plains where sugarcane, cereals and other life-giving crops grow. The towering mountain with its proud peaks that harbour venomous snakes is worthless for all living beings and harmful as far as fostering life on this earth is concerned, whereas the lowly plain which is symbolically at the foot of the lofty mountain becomes a crucible that supports all forms of life because it has crops, minerals and other life-sustaining factors.]

39. अति ऊँचे भूधरनि पर, भुजगन के अस्थान ।

तुलसी अति नीचे सुखद, ऊख अन्न अरु पान ॥

39. ati ūm̐cē bhūdharani para, bhujagana kē asthāna.  
tulasī ati nīcē sukhada, ūkha anna aru pāna..

Tulsidas says that on a 'high' mountain reside poisonous snakes and serpents which are dangerous and detrimental to sustenance of life on earth (because these reptiles kill all living beings by biting them, thereby rendering the already harsh and inhospitable terrain of the barren and rocky mountains more un-inhabitable and out of bounds for all living beings).

On the other hand, there are the comparatively humble and 'lowly' plains that are symbolically like the foot of the mountain, but these lowly plains produce abundance of sugar-cane, cereals and other food products, as well as water which together foster life in all its vibrant forms. [39]

[In this verse, the higher castes are compared to the high mountains, and their members who do not have devotion for Lord God in the form of Sri Ram as the venomous snakes who do no good for the world, but only create nuisance and harm for it. On the other hand, a low caste with members having devotion for the Lord God is compared to the lowly plains that produce sweet sugarcane and other life-sustaining plants and crops. These seemingly lowly and humble plains foster life and are conducive for all round welfare of the living being, whereas the high mountains with their proud heads symbolised by their sky-touching summits and peaks are a bane for life on this earth because they harbour life-threatening snakes and are themselves barren, dry, unwelcoming and most un-inhabitable.

In other words, members of the higher caste think that they are privileged and honourable just by the virtue of their birth in the higher echelons of society, but this is an erroneous perception because if they do not live up to the high ideals set for them by the scriptures, and one such condition is to have devotion for Lord God, then they are as dangerous and loathsome as the snake.

On the other hand, if a person is born in a lower caste in the society but live an exemplary life as laid down in the scriptures, and especially has devotion for the Lord God, then such persons and the society to which they belong becomes very honourable and praise-worthy. Their company gives peace and happiness as opposed to the company of fallen members of the higher caste who only create disillusionment and grief.]

40. चौ०— अति अनन्य जो हरि को दासा । रटै नाम निसिदिन प्रति स्वासा ॥  
तुलसी तेहि समान नहिं कोई । हम नीकें देखा सब कोई ॥

40. caupā'ī- ati anan'ya jō hari kō dāsā. raṭai nāma nisidina prati svāsā..  
tulasī tēhi samāna nahim̐ kō'ī. hama nīkēm̐ dēkhā saba kō'ī..

He who is totally surrendered to Lord Hari (another name of the 'Supreme Being' or Lord Vishnu; here referring to 'Lord Ram' as he is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu) and chants the Lord's holy name ('RAM') day and night with each breath—Tulsidas says that after closely observing all types of people in this world he has come to the conclusion that such a man has no equal. [40]

[That means, a man who has devotion for Lord God—and here the Lord God refers to Lord Ram, a man who has unconditionally surrendered himself to the Lord, and a man who remembers the Lord constantly and repeats the Lord's holy name with each of his breath, is regarded as the most honourable and praise-worthy man by Tulsidas.

Refer also to verse nos. 38—39 herein above.]

41. चौ०— जदपि साधु सबही बिधि हीना। तद्यपि समता के न कुलीना॥  
यह दिन रैन नाम उच्चरै। वह नित मान अग्नि महँ जरै॥

41. caupāī- jadapi sādhu sabahī bidhi hīnā. tadyapi samatā kē na kulīnā..  
yaha dina raina nāma uccarai. vaha nita māna agini maham̐ jarai..

A pure-hearted and saintly person known as a “sādhu” (even of a lower caste), though he possesses nothing in terms of material wealth and other worldly possessions, and is utterly humble, is superior in comparison to those born in the upper caste (and are fortunate to have access to material things of the gross world)—because the former chants the Lord's holy and purifying name day and night, while the latter gradually dissipates himself by burning daily in the fire of false-pride and ego (of being superior to others by the virtue of his taking birth in the so-called ‘upper caste’, and having power, wealth and pomp). [41]

[This verse clearly means that merely taking birth in the so-called upper caste of a Brahmin or Kshatriya etc. has no relevance as far as the person's real worth is concerned. If he thinks that he is superior to his brethren born in some other lower classes such as a Shudra or any other class in the hierarchy of society, then he is sadly mistaken and making a fool of himself.

The real worth of a person depends on what qualities he possesses himself as an individual, and not on his family or race. If he has abundance of good qualities even though he is born in a underprivileged family or the so-called ‘low caste’, then he is eligible for great respect and honour as compared to a man who prides himself of a high birth but has negative traits in him.

Say after all, what is the use of having a mountain if it harbours a barren rocky landscape that is inhabited by poisonous snakes? As compared to it, the lowly plain is far better that welcomes life and acts as a crucible for its growth.]

42. दोहा— दास रता एक नाम सों, उभय लोक सुख त्यागि।  
तुलसी न्यारो ह्वै रहै, दहै न दुख की आगि॥

42. dōhā- dāsa ratā ēka nāma sōm̐, ubhaya lōka sukha tyāgi.  
tulasī n'yārō hvai rahai, dahai na dukha kī āgi..

The Lord's servant (one who has surrendered himself before the Lord) loves only the name of the Lord, leaving aside any desire for the pleasures of this gross mundane world (as long as he is alive) as well as for the pleasures of heaven (that he hopes to enjoy after death).

[To wit, a true devotee of the Lord God finds great peace and comfort in the service of the Lord and in remembering him. For such a person, all other things of this world, all limited attractions of this gross world as well as the seemingly infinite charms of the heaven have no value and meaning. All of them are worthless for him when they are compared to the peace and happiness that he derives from serving his Lord God and singing the Lord's divine glories. He would rather bask in the warm sunshine of the Lord's divine glories than enjoying the romantic environment of the full moon's light.]

Tulsidas says that such a person lives a unique life of detachment, dispassion and renunciation. Hence, he does not have to suffer (or 'burn') from the fire of sorrow and miseries that is inherent and natural with any sort of interaction with the material objects of this entrapping world of delusions and ignorance. [42]



शान्ति-वर्णन

śānti-varṇana

(Spiritual Peace, how it is Obtained, and its Importance)

43-44. दोहा— रैनि को भूषन इंदु है, दिवस को भूषन भानु।  
 दास को भूषन भक्ति है, भक्ति को भूषन ग्यानु॥  
 ग्यान को भूषन ध्यान है, ध्यान को भूषन त्याग।  
 त्याग को भूषन शांतिपद, तुलसी अमल अदाग॥

43-44. dōhā- raini kō bhūṣana indu hai, divasa kō bhūṣana bhānu.  
 dāsa kō bhūṣana bhakti hai, bhakti kō bhūṣana gyānu..  
 gyāna kō bhūṣana dhyāna hai, dhyāna kō bhūṣana tyāga.  
 tyāga kō bhūṣana śāntipada, tulasī amala adāga..

The Moon is the jewel of the night; the Sun adorns the day; a Bhakta's (a devotee of Lord God; one who has surrendered himself to the Lord) ornament is in his devotion; 'Gyan' (knowledge of the Absolute Truth; awareness of the 'true self'; enlightenment about the Supreme Being known as Brahman) is the ornamentation of devotion; 'Dhyan' (constant remembrance and ability to remain focused on the Truth and the Self) is the ultimate aim of Gyan (acquisition of knowledge about the real and absolute Truth); and 'Tyag' (renunciation, detachment and dispassion towards everything that is gross and detrimental for one's spiritual well-being) is the fruit of Dhyan as well as Gyan (i.e. all spiritual endeavours).

According to Tulsidas, the attainment of 'Shanti Pad', i.e. the ultimate spiritual bliss, peace and tranquillity, the existence marked by blessedness, beatitude and

felicity, is the best reward that one obtains as a result or fruit of all the above endeavours.

[That is, the attainment of final peace and rest for the soul is the ultimate goal of all spiritual endeavours and efforts that a living being makes. If this goal is not achieved then all efforts are deemed to have gone in vain.] [43-44]

[Note—The steps mentioned by Tulsidas to attain spiritual bliss and peace and the final rest for the soul are the following—(i) Bhakti (devotion for Lord God), (ii) Gyan (knowledge of the spiritual Truth and overcoming ignorance), (iii) Dhyan (meditation, constant remembrance and remaining focused on this spiritual Truth), and (iv) finally Tyag (renunciation, detachment and dispassion; remaining neutral towards all the material attractions of this gross and deluding world).

In other words, Bhakti is the first stepping-stone that takes the creature through the successive steps, such as attainment of Gyan that leads to Dhyan and then to Tyag, that culminates ultimately into obtaining the final objective of achieving the ‘Shanti Pad’, i.e. obtaining eternal peace and bliss for the soul of the living being.

The immense importance of Shanti Pad has been elaborated by Tulsidas in the following verses.]

45. चौ०— अमल अदाग शांतिपद सारा । सकल कलेस न करत प्रहारा ॥  
तुलसी उर धारै जो कोई । रहै अनंद सिंधु महँ सोई ॥

45. caupāī- amala adāga śāntipada sārā. sakala kalēsa na karata prahārā..  
tulasī ura dhārai jō kōī. rahai ananda sindhu maham̐ sōī..

This ‘Shanti Pad’ (i.e. the exalted state of spiritual existence characterised by bliss, joy, happiness, blessedness, contentedness, beatitude, felicity and tranquillity), which is immaculate, perfectly holy and divine as well as unaffected by any of the impurities associated with this gross mundane and deluding world, is indeed the essence of all spiritual pursuits. None of the taints and miseries associated with this world is able to damage it or cause any dint on its glorious stature.

Tulsidas says that those who keep it in their hearts (i.e. those who remain focused on the ‘pure consciousness’ residing in their subtle heart and meditate upon the Absolute Truth of the ‘Self’ instead of allowing themselves to be distracted by the illusionary charms of this material world of sense objects which only create delusions and nothing else), such people remain submerged in an ocean of perpetual bliss, peace and tranquillity; they have access to an eternal source of everlasting peace and happiness. [45]

46. बिबिध पाप संभव जो तापा । मिटहिं दोष दुख दुसह कलापा ॥  
परम सांति सुख रहै समाई । तहँ उतपात न भेदै आई ॥

46. bibidha pāpa sambhava jō tāpā. miṭahīṁ dōṣa dukha dusaha kalāpā..  
parama sānti sukha rahai samāī. taham̐ utapāta na bhēdai āī..

The numerous sufferings and intolerable sorrows which are caused by various sins and misdemeanours of a living being are overcome when one obtains the exalted state of Shanti Pad.

He who has realised that 'Shanti Pad' enters that eternally blissful state of mind which no mischief associated with this mundane world can ever penetrate, and it can never disturb the peaceful state of his inner-self. [46]

47. तुलसी ऐसे सीतल संता। सदा रहै एहि भाँति एकंता॥  
कहा करै खल लोग भुजंगा। कीन्ह्यौ गरल-सील जो अंगा॥

47. tulasī aisē sītala santā. sadā rahai ēhi bhām̐ti ēkantā..  
kahā karai khala lōga bhujaṅgā. kīnhyau garala-sīla jō aṅgā..

Tulsidas says that such self-realised saints (as described in the foregoing verses) become calm and peaceful, both externally as well as internally, and they prefer to remain alone so that their inner-self and its peace are not disturbed by any external influences associated with this world.

[In other words, they prefer to remain aloof from the world and free from any attachments with it so that there is no cause that would give rise to any sort of emotional turmoil and grief for them. They would rather prefer to remain in a state of perpetual bliss and peace that comes with meditation on the pure conscious 'self' that is a fount of such glorious qualities as pure bliss and happiness.]

Say, what can worldly scoundrels—who have converted themselves into jealous poisonous snakes (i.e. who always harm those who come in contact with them; who are jealous of the way others live in peace and happiness that have eluded them in spite of their best efforts to obtain these virtues)—do to harm such self-realised saints and rob them of their eternally peaceful state of existence known as the 'Shanti Pad'? [47]

[To wit, scoundrels and wicked people try hard to disturb the mental poise and internal peace of pious individuals. But all their evil designs and mechanisms have no affect on truly self-realised saints and holy men because no matter what happens in the external world such men always maintain their calm demeanours. This is because this eclectic state of being is related to the inner-self and not to the gross body and its sense organs. Whereas the external body and its sense organs find comfort in the external world and its relevant sense objects, the inner-self of a living being is free from such encumbrances as it seeks to find comfort and peace in the pure conscious 'self' that is free from all influences of the gross external world.]

48. दोहा— अति सीतल अतिही अमल, सकल कामना हीन।  
तुलसी ताहि अतीत गनि, बृत्ति सांति लयलीन॥

48. dōhā- ati sītala atihī amala, sakala kāmanā hīna.  
tulasī tāhi atīta gani, br̥tti sānti layalīna..

Those who are of an extremely placid, cool and of an equanimous temperament, those who are exemplarily immaculate, pure and holy, those who are without any desire

whatsoever, and those whose nature and inclinations have become calm and quiet (i.e. those who have conquered the natural tendencies of their sense organs of action and perception to enjoy the world and seek self-gratification)—Tulsidas says that such realised souls should be regarded as having attained the transcendental state of existence known as ‘atīta’, or a state of eternal spiritual bliss and blessedness, a state of perpetual mental peace and tranquillity.

Such saints and their state of existence are beyond comprehension of ordinary men who are engrossed in this gross material world and seek comfort and peace in it. [48]

49. चौ०— जो कोइ कोप भरे मुख बैना। सन्मुख हतै गिरा-सर पैना॥  
तुलसी तऊ लेस रिस नहीं। सो सीतल कहिए जग माहीं॥

49. caupā'i- jō kō'i kōpa bharē mukha bainā. sanmukha hatai girā-sara painā..  
tulasī ta'ū lēsa risa nāhīm. sō sītala kahi'ē jaga māhīm..

[How can one recognise a ‘true and pious saint’ who has attained real and eternal state of internal peace, has developed a high degree of detachment from the world, remains unruffled even against the greatest of odds and gravest of provocations, and has become truly self-realised? Here is the way—]

Tulsidas says that if a person remains calm and poised, if he does not lose his temper, and maintains a sense of equanimity and indifference even when someone angrily speaks to him using highly acrimonious and insulting words that are like sharp arrows shot at him—then such a person is to be regarded as truly pious and saintly in this world. [49]

50. सात दीप नव खंड लौ, तीनि लोक जग माहिं।  
तुलसी सांति समान सुख, अपर दूसरो नाहिं॥

50. sāta dīpa nava khaṇḍa lau, tīni lōka jaga māhīm.  
tulasī sānti samāna sukha, apara dūsarō nāhīm..

Tulsidas says that there is no greater happiness than that obtained by having peace of mind and heart anywhere in the world consisting of seven Dwips (continents; large islands), nine Khandas (parts or segments of the earth), and three Lokas (worlds, such as the heaven, the earth and the nether world).

[In other words, the greatest asset a man can possess in his life is peace and bliss of the mind and heart. Say, of what use are all the material things of this world taken together if they cannot give true rest and in-depth internal peace to the creature?] [50]

51. चौ०— जहाँ सांति सतगुरु की दई। तहाँ क्रोध की जर जरि गई॥  
सकल काम बासना बिलानी। तुलसी बहै सांति सहिदानी॥



51. caupāī- jahām̐ sānti sataguru kī da'ī. tahām̐ krōdha kī jara jari ga'ī.  
sakala kāma bāsanā bilānī. tulasī bahai sānti sahidānī..

As soon as one comes in contact with a 'Sat-Guru' (a truly self-realised, enlightened, wise and learned teacher)<sup>1</sup>, receives advice from him, and then implements it (or practices the Guru's advice), peace is obtained.

And as soon as this internal peace is obtained, anger and restlessness (that are faults of the inner-self and caused by lack of internal stability of the mind and heart) are burnt from their roots.

[In other words, internal instability and restlessness of the mind and heart are the primary cause of anger. If one's internal self is calm and happy, then there will be no anger and its accompanying agitations.]

Not only anger, but all sorts of other negative traits such as Kaam and Vasanas (worldly desires, lust, and yearnings for self gratification) are also vanquished.

If this happens, i.e. if a man learns to exercise control over his anger, and is able to overcome his lust and desires, then it is a sure and irrefutable sign of his having attained a state of true Shanti (which is an eternal state of peace, bliss, happiness and tranquillity). [51]

[<sup>1</sup>The "Guru" = The importance of a Guru has been emphasised in a number of Upanishads, viz.—

(a) Shukla Yajur Veda's following Upanishads—Advai Tarak Upanishad, verse no. 14-18; Shatyayani Upanishad, verse no. 39; Niralamba Upanishad, verse no. 30.

(b) Krishna Yajur Veda's following Upanishads—Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse no. 35; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 44; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 56-59, and Canto 6, verse no. 79; Kathrudra Upanishad, verse no. 39; Shuk-Rahasya Upanishad, in its verse no. 21; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 52-53; Yog Kundalini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 3-4; and Canto 2, verse nos. 12-13; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 76; Rudra Upanishad, verse no. 3 (Lord Rudra is the universal Guru).

(c) Atharva Veda's following Upanishad—Manduka Upanishad, Mundak (Canto) 1, section 2, verse nos. 12-13; Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 5, paragraph nos. 10-11, and Canto 8, paragraph no. 17, 1<sup>st</sup> stanza; Bhavana Upanishad, verse no. 1.

(d) A minor Upanishad named the 'Dwayo-panishad' is entirely dedicated to enumerating the chief characteristics of a Guru. It is not known to which Veda it precisely belongs.

(e) The *Anand Ramayan* (said to be written by sage Valmiki) narrates the virtues of the Guru in its Manohar Kand, Sarga (Canto) 3, verse nos. 7-17.

(f) The glory and importance of a Guru has been highlighted by Goswami Tulsidas in his epic *Ram Charit Manas*—(i) Baal Kand, stanza no. 5 of first Sortha with which this epic opens, followed by verses from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 1, to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 2; (ii) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line 8 that precedes Doha no. 44; (iii) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line 8 that precedes Doha no. 106; (iv) (iii) Uttar Kand, Doha no. 106 Kha; (v) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line 2 that precedes Doha no. 107.

Who is a true Guru? This is a question which has baffled many a scholars. The word 'Guru' simply means a person who is one's teacher—be it in the field of knowledge

that pertains to the world or the field that relates to the spiritual. He is the person who makes a person acquire knowledge that he did not have earlier.

The Upanishads explain the term Guru in detail and list the virtues that a wise and enlightened Guru is supposed to possess. They also outline the characteristics that a good disciple must have, and how best one can choose a good Guru.

The word *Guru* has two parts—viz. ‘Gu’ meaning darkness, and ‘Ru’ meaning light. Hence the word ‘Guru’ means a person who can remove the darkness symbolising ignorance and illusions that has engulfed the disciple from all sides and act as a hindrance or an obstacle in his emancipation and salvation by showing him the truthful path, or lighting his path with the light of knowledge and holding out his hands to support him when he falters. Therefore he is an exalted, revered and much sought after person who can remove the darkness of ignorance of his follower by showing him the light of knowledge and guides him whenever he finds himself in a moral dilemma and quandary. He is the person who is both the moral preceptor as well as the spiritual guide of his disciple. He is supposed to act as a neutral advisor to his ward in all matters temporal and spiritual. The disciple is expected to confide in him his greatest of secrets without the fear of betrayal or blackmail. He is the one who is expected to have risen above all kinds of vested interests and keeps the welfare of the disciple as his main objective. He is the one who has transcended the mundane and has acquired sublime awareness of the supreme Reality, because only those who are themselves aware of anything can hope to tell others about it. Therefore it is deemed that only a person of high mental, intellectual, spiritual and ethical caliber can become a true Guru.

A true Guru is treated as being equivalent to the ‘Trinity Gods’—(1) Brahma, the creator, because he creates or helps to take birth good virtues and noble qualities in his disciple; (2) Vishnu, the sustainer, because he nourishes, sustains and helps to inculcate and develop wisdom and enlightenment in his disciple and leads him on the truthful path; and (3) Shiva, the concluder, because he helps to end, conclude and eliminate ignorance and negative traits in his disciple. He is ‘God like’ because he functions in all these capacities at the same time, besides being exalted in all knowledge, being virtuous, of high moral character and beyond reproach, being a source of unbound spiritual energy, being self realised and enlightened, and being eternal in the sense that what he advises to his disciple, the path he shows, the light that he lights in the dark heart of the creature, makes him immortal. The Rudra Upanishad, verse no. 3 explicitly asserts that Lord Shiva is the universal Guru of all, and that the Guru is Shiva personified in this form.

Therefore, a Guru is honoured for the divine virtues that he represents and embodies, that he teaches and implements in his life, for the divinity, for the Lord and for the personification of the great teachings of the scriptures that he exemplifies.

When the teacher (Guru) is especially pleased with a particular student, he would naturally be inclined to pay more attention to him as compared to others. This is natural for him because he sees in this student a spark of great future, a soul who would sincerely and honestly carry forward the teacher’s legacy forward and make his teachings as well as his name and fame immortal. As for other less brilliant and devoted students, or those who are just mediocre and run-of-the-mill sort, the teacher has no such grand expectations from them. So he prefers to impart the best of education to his special and most-favoured student. The teacher would even unravel top secrets to him because he is confident that this disciple would never misuse them and also understand these secrets correctly and properly. This relationship is just like

a father of more than one son. The father would have a natural love for the son in whom he sees a bright future and from whom he expects the family's good name and fortune to get a boost as compared to those sons who are like blights on the family.

The Guru is regarded as a personification of the great knowledge of the scriptures (refer Tripadvibut Maha-Narayan Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 5, paragraph no. 10), as well as Lord Maha Vishnu himself (refer Tripadvibut Maha-Narayan Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 8, paragraph no. 17, 1<sup>st</sup> stanza). It is not his physical body that is of any value for veneration, for the eternal 'soul' and not the physical gross body is venerable.

The *Bhavana Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its opening verse no. 1 emphasises the importance of true Guru and says that he is the primary source of Shakti (strength, energy, vitality, vigour and authority) for the spiritual aspirant and his primary advisor and moral support. The aspirant relies on the authority of the Guru and his knowledge to faithfully move ahead in a field which is still unknown to him and un-chartered by him, without the fear of going on the wrong path or falling prey to uncertainties.

The wise, learned and enlightened Guru (a moral preceptor, guide and teacher) is a true advisor and guide for a spiritual aspirant. He is the one who acts as the primary source of strength and support that empowers the person to move ahead on his spiritual path and ultimately attain success in his endeavours. He is the virtual 'Shakti' or source of energy, motivation, strength, power and authority that provides the necessary support, impetus and dynamism to all the efforts made by the aspirant to reach his goal in life successfully. But for this to materialize, the Guru himself should be an expert in his field, and inclined to helpful and supporting; he should be a teacher, a preceptor, a motivator, an advisor, a friend and a guide all rolled into one. There is a minor Upanishad called *Dwayo-panishad* which describes the chief characteristics of a true Guru. It has only seven Mantras. This Upanishad is being cited here verse by verse to clearly highlight the main features of a Guru:---

‘(a) Verse nos.1-2= A person is called a Guru if he is endowed with enlightenment and wisdom making him well versed and skilled in the Vedas, both in their literal knowledge as well as in the profound wisdom and the ethereal and eclectic metaphysical and spiritual philosophy they contain, who is an ardent devotee and sincere follower of Lord Vishnu, who is free from such negative traits as jealousy, envy and malice, who is well versed and skilled in the various holy and divine Mantras, their usage, their ethereal importance and spiritual significance as well as all other matters related with them, who is sincerely devoted to those Mantras and has firm belief, conviction and faith in them, who seeks the shelter and refuge of those Mantras, who is pure and immaculate, uncorrupt and unpolluted in any form, who is devoted and dedicated to his own Guru, and who is well versed and skilled not only in all the Purans but all other scriptures as well.

(b) Verse no.3= A person is called a Guru who has a comprehensive and holistic knowledge and understanding of all the scriptures, and who not only preaches righteousness, probity and propriety as well as nobility of thoughts and actions but also lives them and implements them in their letter and spirit in his personal life.

(c) Verse no. 4= The letter 'Gu' means darkness, while the letter 'Ru' means that which remove that darkness. Hence, Guru is one who removes the darkness representing ignorance and delusions that are so typically associated with this deluding world.

(d) Verse no.5= A true Guru is equivalent to the supreme and transcendental Brahman; he is the ultimate destination for a seeker; he is a fount of the supreme

knowledge and the source of the best of such knowledge; he is deemed to be the best and the greatest asset for a man.

(e) Verse no.6= A Guru is the best thing a wise seeker seeks and searches for, he is the best and the supreme place for seeking refuge and shelter with, and he being a dispenser of the profoundest of wisdom and knowledge is deemed to be a person who is the most important, who has the highest standards of greatness and magnificence, who is most dignified and meritorious, who is most weighty and significant, and who is most distinct and outstanding in all aspects.

(f) Verse no.7= Pronouncing the word ‘Guru’ even once enables the aspirant to access liberation and deliverance from this entrapping and deluding world. All his efforts are deemed to have been successful by simply saying this powerful word sincerely. Such a man does never come back (enters the cycle of birth and death) in this world again—verily, this is the truth. Those who understand this fact correctly get the desired fruit’.]

52. तुलसी सुखद सांति को सागर। संतन गायो करन उजागर।।  
तामैं तन मन रहै समोई । अहं अग्नि नहिं दाहैं कोई।।

52. tulasī sukhada sānti kō sāgara. santana gāyō karana ujāgara..  
tāmēm tana mana rahai samōī. ahaṁ agini nahim dāhairṁ kōī..

Tulsidas says that the state of exalted existence known as the ‘Shanti Pad’ (i.e. the state of self-realisation and spiritual enlightenment) that has been lauded by great sages and saints as being an ocean of eternal peace, bliss and happiness, is of such immense value for the living being (known as the ‘Jiva’) that if one finds it and seeks its protection by remaining submerged in its cool nectar than such a man cannot be scorched by the raging fire of ‘Ahankar’ (ego, false pride about one’s self and one’s material possessions and stature) that burns the rest of the world. [52]

[Simply put, it means that those who have attained knowledge of the ‘spiritual truth’ and remain submerged in meditation—i.e. those who have understood that this world is gross and mortal, and it can never give any sort of permanent peace and happiness to the creature, that true peace and happiness comes by detaching oneself from this world and concentrating upon the inner-self and seeking peace there—are able to overcome the negative trait of Ahankar which means to have ego and a false sense of self importance that leads to arrogance and haughtiness about one’s gross body and its abilities, as well as about one’s material possessions and stature in society in an essentially deluding world of grossness.

This state of existence when one overcomes Ahankar becomes a reality when one realises that his ‘true self’ is not the gross body but the pure Consciousness that lives in his subtle heart as his inner-self. This ‘self’ lacks nothing, and for it the external world of material sense objects is irrelevant and inconsequential because whereas the world is perishable and transient, the ‘self’ is imperishable and eternal.]

53. दोहा— अहंकार की अग्नि में, दहत सकल संसार।  
तुलसी बाँचै संतजन, केवल सांति अधार।।

53. dōhā-ahankāra kī agini mēm, dahata sakala sansāra.  
tulasī bām̐cai santajana, kēvala sānti adhāra..

The whole world is burning in the fire of ‘Ahankar’ (“ahankāra”; false-pride and egotism)<sup>1</sup>. Tulsidas says only true saints are saved from it for they take shelter in the comforting shadow of Shanti Pad. [53]

[Ahankar = This is the notion of having false ego, self-pride, self-assertion, vanity, boastfulness, self-righteousness, arrogance, haughtiness; a sense of hypocrisy, false prestige and false pride; to think that one is the doer and achiever; to erroneously believe that success is obtained by one’s efforts alone, and that one is superior to others in many respects etc. A false sense of prestige, importance, majesty and grandeur is associated with ‘Ahankar’.

The notion of a separate and distinguished ‘I’; the concept of ‘I am’.

Ahankar from the metaphysical perspective is the erroneous concept that ‘I’ is the body and not the ‘pure conscious soul’, and this leads to a chain of undesirable consequences because of the grossness of the body as compared to the subtle and sublime nature of the soul. The ego that is generated due to the misplaced thinking of ‘I am’ as a distinguished entity from the rest of the creation leads to ignorance-based sense of false pride and prestige, called Ahankar, which in turn produces arrogance and haughtiness which are inseparable from Ahankar. The constant identification of ‘I’ (me) with the body and this material world of sense objects lead to the sense of possessiveness in the creature. ‘Pure consciousness’ mired by ego becomes ‘a conditioned consciousness’ and fails to remain pure.

This is why Ahankar has been likened to a minister of the king—it directs and regulates the actions of the consciousness which, under its influence, loses its independence. This ‘conditioned consciousness’, working through the mind-intellect-ego combine, is called, inter-alia, ‘Chitta’. The word also means sub-conscious and its memory bank. Hence this memory of the sub-conscious acts as a referral library for the intellect. The latter falls back on it and rely on it whenever it is in doubt. The quality of books in the library guides the student; similarly, the quality of inherent tendencies stored in the library of Chitta directly affects the inputs of the intellect, and through it, the mind and successively down the hierarchy to the body and its organs of perception and action.

Although the soul has nothing to do with this command chain involving Chitta (sub-conscious and memory)—Vrittis (inherent tendencies and inclinations, nature and temperament) and Vasanas (passions and desires)—Buddhi (intellect)—Mana (emotions and notions, the emotive thoughts)—Sharir (body)—Karma(action and deeds)—the result of deeds and actions—more experience—stored in memory—and the chain continues, but for all practical purposes the Atma/soul is deemed responsible for it because of its sovereign nature.

So, the sincere seeker/aspirant should delineate this conscious from the rest of the chain and break the nexus between them so as to allow the glory of the pure consciousness of the soul to shine through like the splendorous sun breaking through from behind a curtain of clouds.

It is like removing the various veils or covers from around the candle so that its light shines through the darkness of the room and illuminates all the corners of it.

Example of a sleeping man—Ahankar is generally associated with the body when the creature thinks that he has so many achievements to his credit and that he has achieved them with his body. He erroneously begins to have a notion of possessiveness and belonging to this world; he starts to conjure up imaginary relations

that have their relevance only as long as there is the body, for once a man dies these relations snap even without notice, and even in the case the ignorant Atma wished to retain them it cannot because the same son and wife whom he loved so much are eager to get rid of the dead body which is causing pollution in the household! So, when a man snuffs out Ahankar from his mental radar, he becomes as indifferent and dispassionate as a sleeping man who is unconcerned with the external world.

For example, if the house is on fire, a sleeping man wouldn't be bothered at all as long as he is asleep because he is totally disassociated with the house. He does not bother because he is not attached with his 'possession'; a sleeping man just cannot think that the house that he had built on his own strength and effort is getting destroyed. But once he gains consciousness, he is struck with grief and dismay. Similarly, when a wise man realises that the world is not related to him, and his true identity is his Atma and not the body, then he isn't bothered either with the body or the world with which the body is related and the various relations that exist only because of the existence of the body. The Atma has no relationships whatsoever. Absence of Ahankar eliminates all these at one go.

For all practical purposes, a wise man is as good as asleep as far as the external world is concerned. Even as a sleeping person forgets all about the outside world because his sense of belonging to and identification with the world, of calling the world mine and your, of having love or hatred, of having attachment or detachment, of having animosity/enmity or endearment and friendship, of having happiness or grief—all such emotions are literally 'asleep' with him. Similarly, a person who does not have Ahankar is freed from such emotions that are directly related with his sense of involvement with the world through the medium of the body, though he appears to be awake and active in this world.

The Atma or soul is pure and these things have got nothing to do with it. But because there is the false belief that the creature is the gross body and not the pure consciousness and pure self which is called the soul or Atma, all the external actions done by the body appears to have been done by the creature which, in fact, is an erroneous conclusion.

The Atharva Veda's *Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad*, verse no. 35 says that the Lord (Vishnu as the Supreme Being) had used the three Gunas such as the Sata Guna, the Raja Guna and the Tama Guna, as well as Ahankar (ego and pride) to represent his four arms with which the Lord controls the characters and behaviour of this creation.

The *Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad*, verse no. 24 says that Ahankar is a result of the combination of the three Gunas (qualities) known as Sata, Raja and Tama.

The *Varaaha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 3, verse nos. 20 describes how Ahankar interferes with a man's judicious and intelligent thinking, compelling him to believe in and get entangled with things that are not the truth.

The *Varaaha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 4, verse no. 25 asserts that a Jivan Mukta person—i.e. a person who has attained spiritual liberation and deliverance even while he is still alive and goes about his routine affairs of life in a normal way—has no trace of Ahankar in him.

How Ahankar affects the creature's nature and temperament has been succinctly described in *Niralamb Upanishad*, verse nos. 11-12, 20. How it affects the path of spiritual liberation and deliverance of the creature, and why should it be controlled has been explained in *Yogshikha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse nos. 34-37, 150.

How the Mana (mind) creates the notion of Ahankar has been described in *Yogshikha Upanishad*, Canto 6, verse no. 60.

Other references—*Subalo-panishad*, Canto 9, verse no. 13 of Shukla Yajur Veda.

How Ahankar creates hurdles in the path of spiritual liberation and deliverance of the creature, and why should it be controlled has been explained in *Yogshikha Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse nos. 34-37, 150.

The concept of Ahankar has been elaborately described in *Adhyatma Ramayan*, Aranya Kand, Canto 4, verse no.38-39 as well as in Lanka Kanda, canto 12, verse no.19.

Further, how Ahankar affects a creature has been elaborately described in *Adhyatma Ramayan* of Veda Vyasa, in its Uttar Kand, canto 6, verse nos. 41-52.]

54.       महा सांति जल परसि कै, सांत भए जन जोइ।  
            अहं अगिनि ते नहिं दहैं, कोटि करै जो कोइ॥

54. mahā sānti jala parasi kai, sānta bha'e jana jō'i.  
aham agini tē nahim dahaim, kōṭi karai jō kō'i..

Those saints who have obtained a sense of exemplary calmness, and have cooled their inner selves by coming in contact with the cool and soothing waters symbolised by the profound spiritual peace and bliss that are attained by accessing the exalted state of Shanti Pad (as narrated in the foregoing verses), in all sooth and without gainsay such pious souls are not affected or scorched by the heat of 'Ahankar', no matter how hard anyone tries to burn them with this heat. [54]

[To wit, those who have attained internal peace and reached the exalted state of existence, known as 'self-realisation', become so calm and peaceful that no amount of provocation from the external would be able to rouse any trace of negative trait known as 'Ahankar' in them. They remain free from it and thus un-scorched by its blazing fire that keeps the rest of the world burning.]

55.       तेज होत तन तरनि को, अचरज मानत लोइ।  
            तुलसी जो पानी भया, बहुरि न पावक होइ॥

55. tēja hōta tana tarani kō, acaraja mānata lō'i.  
tulasī jō pānī bhayā, bahuri na pāvaka hō'i..

The saint who has become enlightened and self-realised, and for all practical purposes has crossed over from this mundane world of grossness and delusions to have reached an exalted spiritual state of blessedness and bliss, begins to radiate a natural divine halo of holiness from his body just like the sun that naturally radiates a bright splendorous light from its body to illuminate its surroundings.

Those who come in contact with such saints are awe-struck and astonished at this self-effusing halo of divinity (that radiates from a saint's gross body), because such a phenomenon is beyond comprehension of ordinary people who remain engrossed in this mortal gross world.

Tulsidas asserts that no matter what happens, a person who has become cooled down by drenching himself or submerging himself in the water of spiritual bliss can never be expected to become as hot as fire again. [55]

[Forsooth, a saintly person who has reached the higher echelons of spiritual realisation and has become enlightened about the Truth of existence and his inner-self can never stoop to a low level of worldly existence that revolves around the perceptions of the gross body and its equally gross organs of perception and action. The natural tendency of all living beings is to seek happiness and comfort wherever they find them. Ordinary men think that the world provides them with happiness and comfort, so they will rush towards the world.

On the other hand, a self-realised soul, a true saint, finds happiness and bliss in the state of existence that transcends this gross world and reaches the state of pure consciousness. They discover that whereas the happiness and comfort that the world provided them was temporary and inconsequential, the one that is obtained by realising the existence of the pure conscious Self is sustainable and robust. So they discard the world of grossness and material sense objects and prefer to live in a state of perpetual bliss that comes with renunciation of the world and attainment of spiritual realisation.]

56. जद्यपि सीतल सम सुखद, जगमें जीवन प्रान ।  
तदपि सांति जल जनि गनौ, पावक तेज प्रमान ॥

56. jadyapi sītala sama sukhada, jagamēm jīvana prāna.  
tadapi sānti jala jani ganau, pāvaka tēja pramāna..

The exalted state of spiritual realisation enables a spiritual aspirant, such as holy saints and pious souls, to become exemplarily cool, quiet and blissful, because they have reached that rare transcendental state of existence that is unaffected by any of the developments of this gross world marked by turmoil and torments. This state of blissfulness and happiness is very dear to them just like an ordinary person loves his life.

[An ordinary person would sacrifice anything he has to ensure that he lives safely. A saint will likewise sacrifice anything if they can remain submerged in the bliss of spiritual realisation. Nothing matters more to them than the peace which comes with this state of existence.]

But the quietude and calmness of realised saints should not be misconstrued as their weakness or impotence or inaptitude. The fact on the contrary is that they are highly empowered, possessing extremely high octane powers of spiritual energy that is no less powerful, potent and dynamic than the abilities and potentials of a raging fire.

[In other words, one must not think that since the saint remains calm when one insults him, the latter is powerless to take revenge or settle scores. The saint remains calm because he has developed a high degree of tolerance, equanimity and neutrality towards this gross world. He bounces off his ears whatever he hears, not allowing anything heard to affect the peace of his inner-self. The abuser thinks that the saint is impotent, but the saint pays no heed to such lowly person and his madness. But should the saint decide to teach his tormentor a lesson, then no power on earth would be able to protect the offender against the wrath of the saint.] [56]



57. चौ०— जरै बरै अरु खीझि खिझावै । राग द्वेष महँ जनम गँवावै ॥  
सपनेहुँ सांति नहीं उन देही । तुलसी जहाँ-जहाँ ब्रत एही ॥

57. caupāī- jarai barai aru khījhi khijhāvai. rāga dvēṣa maham̐ janama gamvāvai..  
sapanēhamū sānti nahīm una dēhī. tulasī jahām̐-jahām̐ brata ēhī..

Those who are always burning in the fire of ego, false pride, lust and desires, those who are angry themselves and make others angry by their behaviour, words and deeds, and those who spend their lives oscillating violently between the emotions of love on the one hand and hatred on the other hand—verily, Tulsidas says that wherever one finds such a temperament in a person, there can be no hope of ever finding true peace and happiness even in one's wildest of dreams (neither in the person who has such a nature nor in the person who keeps a company with such persons because the latter is bound to be affected by the former). [57]

[The idea is straightforward and practical: one must discard ego, worldly desires and anger on the one hand, and learn to control emotions on the other hand if one wishes to become peaceful and happy in the true sense.]

58-59. दोहा— सोइ पंडित सोइ पारखी, सोई संत सुजान ।  
सोई सूर सचेत सो, सोई सुभट प्रमान । (58)  
सोइ ग्यानी सोइ गुनी जन, सोई दाता ध्यानि ।  
तुलसी जाके चित भई, राग द्वेष की हानि ॥ (59)

58-59. dōhā- sō'i paṇḍita sō'i pāraḥī, sō'ī santa sujāna.  
sō'ī sūra sacēta sō, sō'ī subhaṭa pramāna.. (58)  
sō'i gyānī sō'i gunī jana, sō'ī dātā dhyāni.  
tulasī jākē cita bha'ī, rāga dvēṣa kī hāni.. (59)

Tulsidas says that a person from whose mind and thoughts all sorts of (i) 'rāga and dvēṣa' have vanished (i.e. a person who has inculcated the noble virtues of dispassion, neutrality, detachment, equanimity, equality and renunciation which motivates him neither to be too attached with anyone or any thing, nor to have ill-will or animosity or opposition against them)—only such a saintly person can truly be called (ii) a 'Paṇḍita' (a person who is an expert in any field of knowledge; a person who knows the essence of the scriptures and what they intend to say); (iii) a 'Pāraḥī' (one who can distinguish between the truth and falsehood; one who knows the fact and the essence of scriptural teachings that can help one to attain peace in life; one who can judge the quality of any given entity), (iv) a 'Sujāna' (a wise and clever person who is an expert in spiritual field), (v) a 'Sūra' (a person who is brave and bold enough to accept the truth and discard falsehood in spite of the world thinking to the contrary), (vi) a 'Sacēta' (a person who is alert and wide awake; a person who knows what is happening around him and what is good for him), (vii) a proven 'Subhaṭa' ("subhaṭa pramāna"; an acclaimed symbolic warrior who knows how to overcome spiritual obstacles and reach his objective in life that is equivalent to becoming victorious in the world which is compared here to a battle-field of life),

(viii) a ‘Gyānī and (ix) Gunī’ (one who has deep knowledge and is an expert in his field; one who is truly self-realised and enlightened, and therefore possesses noble qualities known as Gunas), (x) a ‘Dātā’ (one who can grant wishes and help others to fulfil their spiritual dreams; a liberal giver; a person who has so much of good qualities and possesses so much of anything that he charitably shares his blessings with others so that they too can enjoy this fruit), (xi) and a true ‘Dhyānī’ (one who does meditation and always remains submerged in it). [58-59]

[These two verses list the eleven eclectic virtues of true saints.]

60. चौ०— राग द्वेष की अग्नि बुझानी । काम क्रोध बासना नसानी ॥  
तुलसी जबहि सांति गृह आई । तब उरहीं उर फिरी दोहाई ॥

60. caupāī- rāga dvēṣa kī agni bujhānī. kāma krōdha bāsanā nasānī..  
tulasī jabahi sānti gr̥ha āī. taba urahīṁ ura phirī dōhāī..

When the fire of ‘rāga and dvēṣa’ (as described in verse nos. 58-59) is extinguished (i.e. when one has become neutral and dispassionate, treating all alike), and at the same time negative qualities of ‘kāma’ (lust and passions), ‘krōdha’ (anger) and ‘bāsanā’ (yearning for self-gratification of the sense organs of the body; lust for worldly material things) are destroyed, it is then only that true peace, tranquillity and restfulness can find their place in one’s inner-self.

And when this happens, the fortunate person feels blessed and privileged. [It is then that his inner-self becomes a habitat of the Atma, the equivalent of the Parmatma, the Supreme Being, who lives in the heaven. In other words, the inner-self of such a person becomes equivalent to heaven.] [60]

61. दोहा— फिरी दोहाई राम की, गे कामादिक भाजि ।  
तुलसी ज्यों रवि कें उदय, तुरत जात तम लाजि ॥

61. dōhā- phirī dōhāī rāma kī, gē kāmādika bhāji..  
tulasī jyōṁ rabi kēṁ udaya, turata jāta tama lāji..

Tulsidas says that as soon as the Kingdom of Lord Ram (an incarnation of Lord God) is established in the inner-self of a saint, all sorts of negative traits such as Kaam etc. are chased away, just like the case when all darkness vanishes from the world as soon as the sun rises in the horizon. [61]

[Note—In other words, when negativities such as Raag, Dwesh, Kaam, Krodh and Vasans are eliminated from the inner-self of a person, it becomes clean. It then becomes an incubator for bliss and peace that are inherent in the pure conscious Atma, which in turn is an image of the supreme Atma known as the Parmatma or Lord God. When this happens, the subtle space of the heart becomes equivalent to heaven where there is the Kingdom of God.

The sun rises in the heaven (the sky) to remove all traces of darkness on the earth below. Similarly, developing devotion and affection for Lord Ram helps a spiritual aspirant to remove the darkness symbolised by the aforementioned negative traits from all corners of his inner-self, thereby illuminating it with a divine light of

realisation and enlightenment. Darkness creates fears of unknown ghosts and phantoms, while light gives an assurance of the known and visible.

In other words, when one develops devotion for Lord Ram and symbolically establishes his kingdom in his heart, all demon-like evil forces of Raag, Dwesh, Kaam, Krodh and Vasanas run away.]

62. यह बिराग संदीपनी, सुजन सुचित सुनि लेहु।  
अनुचित बचन बिचारि के, जस सुधारि तस देहु॥

62. yaha birāga sandīpanī, sujana sucita suni lēhu.  
anucita bacana bicāri kē, jasa sudhāri tasa dēhu..

Listen, Oh Gentlemen! [Here, Tulsidas addresses sincere devotees of the Lord, earnest spiritual aspirants and seekers of peace and happiness.] Please pay attention to, heed and listen carefully with full concentration to what has been said in this ‘Vairagya Sandipani’.

If any wrong or incorrect word/phrase (idea/thought) is found anywhere, then please check/correct it after giving due and wise thought to it.

[In other words, Tulsidas says that whatever he has said in this short book known as Vairagya Sandipani is true to the best of his knowledge and based on his personal experiences. But if someone thinks that he is wrong then he is free to address the error according to his own experiences and wisdom. But let everyone be careful, let all be warned that this is not the case. Nothing wrong or incorrect has been mentioned in Vairagya Sandipani. It is a document of the Truth. [62]

Thus ends this book ‘Vairagya Sandipani’ by Goswami Tulsidas.

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# VAIRĀGYA SANDĪPANĪ

Of Goswami Tulsidas

‘Attributes of Saints that Kindle Renunciation &  
Attainment of Spiritual Blessedness’

[Original Text, Roman Transliteration and  
English Exposition with Notes]

## CHAPTER 2

### The Auspicious Virtues and Noble Characters of Saints

The auspicious and glorious virtues and characters of saints and pious people have been described by Tulsidas in his other great books as well. These are the following:

(1) Ram Charit Manas--

(a) Baal Kand: (i) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 2—to Doha no. 3; (ii) Doha no. 6.

(b) Aranya Kand: Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 45—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 46.

(c) Uttar Kand: (i) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 37—to Doha no. 38; (ii) Doha no. 46 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 13-16, 21-22 that precede Doha no. 121; (iv) Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 125.

(2) Vinai Patrika—verse no. 57.

(3) Dohawali—verse nos. 375—378; 381.

Now, we shall read all of them to understand the depth and dimension of the glories of true saints.

### (1) Ram Charit Manas

(1.1) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand: Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 2—to Doha no. 3:

सुजन समाज सकल गुन खानी । करउँ प्रनाम सप्रेम सुबानी ॥ ४ ॥

sujana samāja sakala guna khānī. kara'um' pranāma saprēma subānī. 4.

I (Tulsidas) now bow my head reverentially, with affection and a sweet voice (i.e. by using polite and respectful words of honour), to the holy community of saints and pious people who are a treasury of all good and auspicious virtues and characters<sup>1</sup>. (4)

[Note—<sup>1</sup>The excellent virtues and exemplary characters of saints have been enumerated in Vairagya Sandipani, verse nos. 8—61.]

साधु चरित सुभ चरित कपासू । निरस बिसद गुनमय फल जासू ॥ ५ ॥  
जो सहि दुख परछिद्र दुरावा । बंदनीय जेहिं जग जस पावा ॥ ६ ॥

sādhū carita subha carita kapāsū. nirasa bisada gunamaya phala jāsū. 5.  
jō sahi dukha parachidra durāvā. bandanīya jēhim jaga jasa pāvā. 6.

The auspicious and glorious lives, deeds and conduct (subha carita) of (true) holy saints and pious people (sādhū) are pure and untainted (subha carita) like the life of the cotton plant (kapāsū). The reward of such a life, howbeit tasteless, insipid and unattractive (nirasa), is nevertheless huge and full of virtues (bisada gunamaya)<sup>1</sup>. (5)

This cotton plant allows itself to undergo immense hardship so that the faults, shortcomings and infirmities of others can be hidden. [To wit, when a cloth is made with this cotton, it is used by others to cover themselves, their bodies, and make many others things of daily usage such as bedsheets, towels, napkins, cotton sheets used as shrouds or to wrap other things, and so on. So the cotton plant does not mind its own sufferings because it gives comfort and protection to others.]<sup>2</sup>.

Verily, this is the reason why such saintly souls (whose lives are compared to the cotton plant) are praised, honoured and revered in this world<sup>3</sup>. (6)

[<sup>1</sup>The cotton plant produces fruits that are tasteless, white in colour, fibrous and dry; no one enjoys such fruits. Likewise, saints and truly holy men are not attached to this world of illusionary charm; they have renounced all worldly pretensions and do not wish to waste their time and energy in worthless talking, thinking or pursuing matters of the mundane world. As such, ordinary people do not find them as a good company; they do not look charming to people who wish to delve in matters related to the world and its numerous material objects.

But albeit such saints seem charmless, they are nevertheless full of virtues and excellent qualities that have great spiritual value and are worthy of praise. Like the colour ‘white’ of the cotton, they are pure at heart and their deeds are holy as well. Their detachment from the material charms of the world and seemingly dry and emotionless nature resembles the fruit of the cotton plant.

<sup>2</sup>The cotton suffers a lot when it is passed through the ginning machine which separates the cotton from its seed, then it is pulled and stretched into a thread, spun into a yarn, and weaved into cloth of various textures. All this puts the cotton through a lot of toils, pains and sufferings, but it never complains. It is rather happy that its sufferings would help others to cover themselves with clothes that would be made from this cotton.

<sup>3</sup>Likewise, truly holy men find happiness in serving others and providing for their welfare even if it means they have to suffer hardships themselves.]

मुद मंगलमय संत समाजू । जो जग जंगम तीरथराजू ॥ ७ ॥

राम भक्ति जहँ सुरसरि धारा । सरसइ ब्रह्म बिचार प्रचारा ॥ ८ ॥

muda maṅgalamaya santa samājū. jō jaga jaṅgama tīratharājū. 7.  
rāma bhakti jaham̐ surasari dhārā. sarasa'i brahma bicāra pracārā. 8.

An assembly or gathering of saints and holy people specially, and the community in a general way<sup>1</sup>, is a provider of auspiciousness, blessedness, joy and happiness to all. In all sooth, this community is like a living embodiment of 'Triveni', which is regarded as the 'King amongst pilgrim sites' (tīratharājū)<sup>2</sup>, in this mortal and mundane world. [To wit, the spiritual benefits that one gets by visiting so many religious places can be got by the company of saints. People visit pilgrim places to clean their inner selves, do penance for sins, and derive some spiritual peace and happiness. This same benefit is availed in the company of saints.] (7)

In this assembly of saints and pious people (which is like a walking 'tīratharāj' in this mundane world), the holy river Ganges symbolized by 'Bhakti' (devotion; surrender; submission; faith) for Lord Ram, and the holy river Saraswati symbolized by thoughts and discourses of Brahm, the Supreme Being, the Supreme Atma, the Supreme Self, flows<sup>3</sup>. [One gets a spiritual environment in the company of saints. This is marked by the devotion and enlightenment.] (8)

[<sup>1</sup>In an assembly, a large number of saints and holy people collect at a single place. This helps to bring together at one place a good collection of great virtues, excellent qualities and noble characters that these saints possess. On the other hand, they live scattered as a community, and it becomes very tedious and impossible for a person to visit every saint and pious man worth his name, for it may not be possible for him to have knowledge of each individual saint of great quality.

Besides this benefit of an assembly of saints vis-à-vis their general community, the other benefit is that one can easily compare the different virtues and characters that the gathered saints possess, which makes it all the more easy to assess them individually and see how they learn from one another, how they strive to overcome their shortcomings without any sign of inferiority or superiority.

While a visit to an individual saint is surely rewarding, but this reward has its limitations because that particular saint may be exalted on one or two counts of virtues but may be lacking to some degree in another virtue. It is also time consuming for a spiritual aspirant if he goes hunting for virtuous saints, wandering from one place to another, for in all probability he may miss to meet them. These shortcomings are done away with when all great saints collect at one place. It helps the spiritual learner because he has the best teachers and guides at one place.

Now, this assembly of saints and holy souls is compared to 'Prayag' because just like the latter is a 'confluence of three great holy rivers', bringing with them their religious benefits and spiritual rewards at one single place, the assembly or gathering of saints 'showcases at one place, in a concentrated form, all the finest of virtues and characters that they possesses'. If one of these saints is deficient in one virtue, then this deficiency is compensated by another saint. The beneficiary of such a show of the best of spiritual talents at one place is the seeker himself, because he is able to make a wise and considered choice, and decide for himself which of the virtues best suits him and his temperament. It also helps these individual saints as well, because it helps them to identify their own shortcomings and take necessary steps to overcome them.

<sup>2</sup>The pilgrim site by the name of ‘Triveni’ is known as the ‘King of pilgrim sites’ (tīratharājū) because three holy rivers have their confluence there. These are (i) river Ganges, (ii) river Saraswati, and (iii) river Yamuna.

Briefly, river Ganges is an embodiment of the virtues of Bhakti (devotion) as it emerged from the toes of Lord Vishnu and was held on the head of Lord Shiva before it descended to earth to provide liberation and deliverance to those who had no other means of salvation. River Saraswati is named after a goddess of the same name who stands for ‘Gyan’ or knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment. Hence, river Saraswati embodies these virtues.

River Yamuna (cited in Chaupai line no. 9 herein below) is the daughter of the Sun God who sustains life in this world, and he inspires the creature to do deeds during the time the sun shines in the sky. The sun also is a symbol of ‘light’ that removes darkness, the darkness of ignorance and delusions. So therefore, Yamuna symbolizes those saints who do their duty in this world like other ordinary creatures, but with a thought on what is good and what is bad, which deed is righteous and which is to be avoided. Such saints may look engrossed in the affairs of the world, but internally they are pure and holy and tranquil. Their company helps a person to learn how to go about one’s life normally, while still gaining spiritual blessedness.

The first river ‘Ganges’ is called the river of Gods, and it is highly praised in the scriptures as very spiritually purifying, and is considered as the holiest amongst the three. It is said that by bathing in its waters a sinful person can literally wash off his sins, i.e. easily atone for them.

In this verse, ‘devotion for Lord Ram’ is likened to this holy river, and its significance is clear: one can easily find liberation and deliverance from sins and troubles of the soul that one encounters while living in this gross world by having devotion for Lord Ram who was a personified form of Brahm, the Supreme Being, just as it is easy to clean one’s body by taking a dip and rubbing off the dirt from one’s body in the crystal clear waters of a great river.

This eclectic spiritual virtue of ‘devotion for Lord Ram’ is invariably practiced in the community of saints. So when a person comes in contact with saints, he feels the positive energy flowing freely; he lives in this spiritually clean and positive environment. He sees how these saintly people are happy and carefree; he observes their lifestyle and conduct. This sets and acts as an example for him, and true to the adage that ‘one becomes like the company one keeps’, a person who is fortunate to come in contact with saints undergoes transformation for good.

<sup>3</sup>The second river is Saraswati. This river represents knowledge and wisdom about the Truth of existence, and about one’s own ‘self’ which is not the gross body but the ‘pure conscious Atma’. ‘Saraswati’ is the patron goddess of knowledge, wisdom, awakening and intellect; this river is named after her as a symbolic representation of the virtues that are the hallmarks of Saraswati.

This virtue of having true knowledge, enlightenment, self-realisation and so forth, is an added bonus and a complimentary virtue to the first virtue of devotion. True saints and holy people are wise enough to take the help of both these two tools for their spiritual good and elevation.

They never waste their time talking about the affairs of the gross, perishable and deluding world of material sense objects and their transient charms and comforts and pleasures. On the contrary, they discuss means to purify their inner self and attain self-realisation. Both ‘devotion’ and ‘contemplation on the Truth of existence, of the self and the Atma’ go hand in hand, as two complimentary tools for one’s spiritual

welfare, liberation and deliverance from this gross world and its delusions, attainment of a state of bliss and beatitude, and the final salvation and emancipation of the ‘self’.

Since both these virtues—(i) devotion for Lord God, and (ii) self-realisation and enlightenment about the Atma, the ‘true self’ of a creature which is not his gross and perishable body, but pure, sublime and subtle Consciousness—are needed for one’s spiritual welfare, and the community of saints practices them in a wholesome manner, and therefore for a spiritual seeker the community of saints is the best place to learn about these eclectic and glorious virtues, and to see them being practiced first hand.

The idea in this verse is that when saints gather at a place, one sees two types amongst them—(i) one who is like river Ganges, and (ii) the other who is like river Saraswati. The first sorts of saints have pure devotion for Lord Ram, and by their communion one is able to learn this virtue, its benefits and practice. The second sorts have self-realisation and knowledge of the Truth, and their company helps one to be enlightened about these virtues, their spiritual benefits, and how to practice this path towards fulfillment of spiritual goals.]

बिधि निषेधमय कलि मल हरनी । करम कथा रबिनंदनि बरनी ॥ ९ ॥  
हरि हर कथा बिराजति बेनी । सुनत सकल मुद मंगल देनी ॥ १० ॥

bidhi niṣēdhamaya kali mala haranī. karama kathā rabinandani baranī. 9.  
hari hara kathā birājati bēnī. sunata sakala muda maṅgala dēnī. 10.

The revered river, who is the daughter of the Sun God (i.e. river Yamuna, which is the third river of the trinity of holy rivers), symbolises the virtue (wisdom) that enlightens a saint about which of the different deeds he should do and which he should avoid. This virtue helps the saint to eliminate the sins that are associated with the era called ‘Kaliyug’, the present period of evil and sinful life<sup>1</sup>. (9)

At such a congregation of saints and pious people, there is a confluence of noble virtues, and freely flowing discourses about divine stories of Lord Hari (Lord Vishnu) and Lord Har (Lord Shiva) which are like the rivers (Ganges, Saraswati and Yamuna) that converge at Triveni (the tīratharāj) with their swift currents<sup>2</sup>. (10)

[<sup>1</sup>A wise and enlightened saint can differentiate between righteous and unrighteous deeds. He will endeavour to do the good deeds, while avoiding those which his sub-conscious tells him are bad for his spiritual welfare. River Yamuna is given a special name here—as being the ‘daughter of the Sun God’. The hidden implication is that this river represents the inherent quality of the sun that it lights up the world and removes its darkness. It is a metaphoric way of saying that the wisdom that river Yamuna stands for enables the saint to see things in the light of knowledge and wisdom. In the bright light of the sun a person is able to see all things distinctly, so likewise by the blessings of river Yamuna a person is able to distinguish between the good and the bad.

The ‘sun’ represents life with all its dynamic activities—because it is during the daytime that every individual gets up and does whatever he is supposed to do in this world. On the other hand, night is dark, and it represents the darkness of delusions and ignorance that makes a creature virtually stunned into inactivity, and this is evident when he shuns all activities and goes to bed, lying motionless as if knocked



unconscious, stupified and numbed. The light of the sun removes all lethargy and delusions, and the same creature regains vitality and energy to do all his pending work as soon as he sees the sun rise and show its light to him.

As we have observed, true saints therefore have three eclectic virtues: (i) devotion, (ii) truthful knowledge, (iii) and the ability to use this knowledge in practice by using the light of wisdom and prudence.

There are four eras according to Hindu scriptures. The fourth era is known as 'Kali-yug'. It has the word "Kali", meaning 'dark; black', as a part of its name. This implies that this era is especially marked by dark deeds that are collectively called sinful. This is why this river also looks dark in colour because it represents the deeds done by a creature during Kaliyug. But this is the external feature of this 'holy' river, for albeit it is dark in colour yet it provides holiness and purity internally. How come? It is because it represents that light of wisdom and discrimination that enables the creature to distinguish between deeds that are righteous, good and noble, and deeds that are not.

So a saint who embodies the virtues of river Yamuna goes about his daily life like ordinary men, but he carefully selects what deeds he does and what he avoids. Therefore, by observing their lives and conduct, the learner spiritual seeker gets to know and see in practice how to live in this world and do one's duties diligently, while still reaping spiritual rewards by remaining aloof from the world and free from its entanglements.

These saints who embody the virtues symbolised by river Yamuna show how one can skip all spiritual and moral faults, taints, shortcomings, smears and scars that will degrade his Atma, his soul, and drag him into the quagmire of worldly affairs that would rob him of his peace and happiness even while remaining involved in one's worldly duties.

<sup>2</sup>At 'Triveni', the rivers come from different directions, but converge into a single body of water. Metaphorically it means that different saints tell the divine stories of the Lord God in different ways and style, highlighting their different aspects and glorious messages, but when the hearer hears them, he is able to stir them into one homogenous story about the divine Lord and his glories in his inner-self, in his mind and subconscious, thereby helping him to extract the best of rewards from all of them by mingling them into one.]

बटु बिस्वास अचल निज धरमा । तीरथराज समाज सुकरमा ॥ ११ ॥

सबहि सुलभ सब दिन सब देसा । सेवत सादर समन कलेसा ॥ १२ ॥

baṭu bisvāsa acala nija dharamā. tīratharāja samāja sukaramā. 11.

sabahi sulabha saba dina saba dēsā. sēvata sādara samana kalēsā. 12.

In the community of saints (here meaning in all individual saints), the faith and trust that each one of them has in the spiritual path that he has chosen to follow, and his steadfastness in that spiritual path (which is the sacrosanct principle of life for him, his "dharamā") are like the 'Vat tree' (the banyan tree) that is strong, has deep roots and a long life.

The noble and virtuous actions and deeds of saints are like the working of the royal court of 'Tīratharāja', the King of holy places. [To wit, just as only noble

people are admitted in the court of a great King, so only those saints who possess noble qualities are allowed to remain in the community of saints. It is not a place for imposters and mevericks. Therefore, their actions and life are reliable.] (11)

This communion of saints, pious souls and noble people is a blessing that can be accessed by all, in all the countries, at all times. By respectfully serving such saints and begetting their blessings, by following their examples and advice, all the internal torments and sorrows that one suffers from can be easily eliminated. [This is because one would learn to lead a noble life and inculcate spiritual virtues, consequentially gaining internal peace, happiness, calmness, solace and comfort.] (12)

अकथ अलौकिक तीरथराऊ । देइ सद्य फल प्रगट प्रभाऊ ॥ १३ ॥

akatha alaukika tīratharā'ū. dē'i sadya phala pragaṭa prabhā'ū. 13.

This confluence of holy virtues at the symbolic holy place called 'Triveni', the King of pilgrim places (tīratharā'ū) has so great an importance that it cannot be described in words, and neither is it visible in physical terms. [To wit, the 'Triveni' that is described in the foregoing verses only has an symbolic form. It is used as a metaphor to highlight the importance of the combined virtues of saints and holy people.]

The assembly or congregation of saints grants quick spiritual rewards, and albeit it is only a symbolic form of Triveni (confluence of holy rivers that symbolise flow of abundant good virtues), but these rewards are tangible. (13)

[It is only for the purpose of emphasizing the importance of a community of noble saints and the immensity of spiritual rewards one gets in their company that the holiest of pilgrim places known as Triveni has been cited in these verses. It is merely a metaphor and example.

So, just like the case that a visit to Triveni bears fruits that are manifold times more than visiting many individual holy places during one's pilgrimage, attending a congregation of saints has far greater benefits than searching them out individually.]

दो०. सुनि समुझहिं जन मुदित मन मज्जहिं अति अनुराग ।  
लहहिं चारि फल अछत तनु साधु समाज प्रयाग ॥ २ ॥

dōhā.

sunī samujhahim̐ jana mudita mana majjahim̐ ati anurāga.  
lahahim̐ cāri phala achata tanu sādhu samāja prayāga. 2.

Those wise people who cheerfully hear about and understand the symbolism and significance of this holy place known as 'Prayāga' (whose other names are Triveni and Tirtha-raj) that represents an assembly of great saints and holy people, take a dip in the waters of this holy place<sup>1</sup> with great faith, affection and reverence, and such people are able to get the four rewards of life as a human being<sup>1</sup> during their lifetime. (Doha no. 2)

[<sup>1</sup>This refers to the practice of taking a ritualistic dip or a bath at the confluence of the three holy rivers at the pilgrim site known as 'Prayag' or 'Triveni' as a religious duty that is said to help the pilgrim to wash off the negative effects of his sins, and atone for them. The implied meaning here is that a spiritual aspirant should join a community of saints and live with them for some time to observe their lifestyles and learn from their virtues, seeking guidance whenever needed, and endeavouring to gradually transmute oneself from what one is at present into a noble person who walks on the same path as shown by these saints to him.

The analogy of the confluence of three great holy rivers and taking a dip into them as a means of obtaining spiritual merit with the communion of saints is very significant. One gets actual benefit and merit by taking a dip or a bath in any holy place, not only at Triveni, only if he mends his old evil and sinful way of life. Otherwise this is a completely futile exercise, and a waste of money and time going on a pilgrim, if one does not become determined to change himself.

Remember: Taking a bath at a pilgrim place merely as a ritual without sincerely following its subtle requirements for purification of the inner self is equivalent to taking a bath in an ordinary pond, or better still in one's home, because the waters of these rivers at pilgrim places are dirty and full of microbes if one thinks that its physical touch will do some magic. It will make him sick instead.

This bath is a symbolic way of washing one's past and cleaning one's self. So the real cleaning comes when no new dirt is allowed to stick to the inner-self. Similarly, merely meeting saints and sages won't help. The real benefit comes if one follows in their footsteps.

<sup>2</sup>The four rewards of leading a meritorious life as a human being are the following: (i) 'Artha' = material well-being; (ii) 'Dharma' = a life of virtues and nobility that begets respect; (iii) 'Kaam' = fulfilment of desires; and (iv) 'Moksha' = liberation and deliverance of the soul from this body and the world.]

चौ०. मज्जन फल पेखिअ ततकाला । काक होहिं पिक बकउ मराला ॥ १ ॥  
सुनि आचरज करै जनि कोई । सतसंगति महिमा नहिं गोई ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

majjana phala pēkhi'a tatakālā. kāka hōhim pika baka'u marālā. 1.  
suni ācaraja karai jani kōī. sataśaṅgati mahimā nahim gōī. 2.

The rewards or benefits of taking a bath in this symbolic holy place (Prayag; Triveni that represents an assembly of saints) is seen soon, and is so astounding and wonderful as if crows mysteriously get transformed into cuckoos, and cranes into swans<sup>1</sup>. (1)

Let no one be astonished with such transformations, for the glory and mystical powers of saints are tremendous and are not hidden from anyone. (2)

[<sup>1</sup>These two instances of a crow getting converted into a cuckoo and a crane into a swan are used in a metaphoric way to emphasise the ability of saints to transform even the most sinful and vile person into one who is honourable and like themselves.

Both the crow and the cuckoo are black in colour, but while the former (the crow) is a hated bird not only for its harsh crowing voice but also because it feeds on flesh of cadavers, the latter (the cuckoo) is a loved bird that sings sweetly and eats plant products like other ordinary birds. The cuckoo is a pet bird of poets.

Similarly, both the crane and the swan have white colour, but their habits and characters are diametrically opposite. The crane is a flesh eating bird, catching fish by standing on one leg in water like a hermit, a posture that cheats the onlooker who may think that the bird is meditating by standing mid-stream; the swan also lives in water but is regarded as a symbol of purity. The swan is a vehicle of goddess Saraswati because it is a symbol of purity though it may live in a surrounding of polluted water of the lake. The swan is a favourite bird with teachers who teach on metaphysics and spiritual philosophy.

Further, the colour of the two sets of birds chosen by Tulsidas also is significant. One set of birds is ‘black’ skinned and the other is ‘white’. It implies that all the people of this world, no matter to which continent or country they belong and which tone of colour their skin has, would universally benefit by their association with saints.

Another reason for selecting a crow and a crane to represent bad and evil people is this: the crow has no pretensions of piety or holiness like the crane which stands mid-stream on one leg like a meditating hermit, only to dive at an innocent and unaware fish and pick it up for food in its beak. To with, this means that there are two sorts of people in this world: one sort that is overtly evil and does not hide its wickedness like the crow, and the other sort is like the crane who are deceitful and cunning, fooling the world by their pretentious exterior of holiness. But both are radically changed when they come in contact with true saints.

Just as this transformation seems magical and astonishing, the change that is brought about in a person with his association of saints is also great and unbelievable.]

**बालमीक नारद घटजोनी । निज निज मुखनि कही निज होनी ॥ ३ ॥**

**bālamīka nārada ghaṭajōnī. nija nija mukhani kahī nija hōnī. 3.**

Great sages like Valmiki<sup>1</sup>, Narad<sup>2</sup> and Agastya<sup>3</sup> (known as “ghaṭajōnī” because he was born in a pitcher) have narrated with their own mouths about their lives, and how they were transmuted into exalted sages due to contact with great saints<sup>1</sup>. (3)

[<sup>1</sup>Valmiki was a highway robber and hunter in his early life. Once he met the seven celestial sages called the ‘Spata-rishis’ who prevailed upon him to change his lifestyle. So, when Valmiki paid heed to their advice, he was transformed into a great sage and poet.

<sup>2</sup>Narad was the son of a maid-servant in his previous birth. By his good fortune he came in contact with holy men who imparted spiritual wisdom to him and their advice and example made Narad into a great devotee of the Lord. In his next birth, he was born as mind-born son of the creator Brahma.

<sup>3</sup>Agastya was the son of Varun, the Water God. He was conceived in and took birth from a pitcher. Another great and renowned sage Vasistha (who later became the teacher and court priest of Lord Ram and his father king Dasrath of Ayodhya) was also born from the same pitcher. This embryonic association of Agastya with another

great sage Vasistha made him an exalted sage himself because now both were like brothers as they shared the same incubator, the pitcher.]

जलचर थलचर नभचर नाना । जे जड़ चेतन जीव जहाना ॥ ४ ॥  
मति कीरति गति भूति भलाई । जब जेहिं जतन जहाँ जेहिं पाई ॥ ५ ॥  
सो जानब सतसंग प्रभाऊ । लोकहुँ बेद न आन उपाऊ ॥ ६ ॥

jalacara thalacara nabhacara nānā. jē jaṛa cētana jīva jahānā. 4.  
mati kīrati gati bhūti bhalā'ī. jaba jēhim jatana jahām' jēhim pā'ī. 5.  
sō jānaba satasaṅga prabhā'ū. lōkahum' bēda na āna upā'ū. 6.

Any creature, whether it is an inhabitant of the water (all sorts of aquatic animals), of the land (terrestrial animals of all species and families), or of the air (birds etc.), whether it is animate or inanimate (such as animals that show dynamic movement, or plants as well as those animals that do not show any apparent movement), anywhere in the world [4]-----

-----whosoever amongst them who has ever got or acquired at any time (jaba jēhim pā'ī) in their lives, any sort of wisdom (mati), glory, fame and acclaim (kīrati), spiritual liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation (gati), material prosperity, welfare, or any other good for themselves (bhūti bhalā'ī), by any method or means in this world (jēhim jatana jahām') [5]-----

-----all of these great and laudable achievements ought to be deemed as the eclectic fruit or reward of good company with saints and holy people.

Verily and forsooth, there is no other means prescribed either by the Vedas or by traditional wisdom in the world by the virtue of which these glories can be achieved. [6] (4—6)

[To wit, if a person wishes to acquire good set of virtues and characters that would make him praise worthy in this world, the best and the easiest way for him or her is the company of pious and holy saints. But one should be committed and sincere in his pursuit of good virtues, for it is only then that he would closely observe the life, conduct, characters and behaviour of saintly people, try to learn from them and inculcate these noble virtues in his own life to actually benefit from the company of such great souls. Otherwise it becomes an exercise of mere scrutiny to find faults with these men and prick holes in them. For remember, no matter how excellent a person may be, after all he is a human being and can't therefore be cent percent perfect. The trick is to pick up and learn the good things, and discard the things that seem not too good.]

बिनु सतसंग बिबेक न होई । राम कृपा बिनु सुलभ न सोई ॥ ७ ॥  
सतसंगत मुद मंगल मूला । सोइ फल सिधि सब साधन फूला ॥ ८ ॥

binu satasaṅga bibēka na hō'ī. rāma kṛpā binu sulabha na sō'ī. 7.  
satasaṅgata muda maṅgala mūlā. sō'ī phala sidhi saba sādhana phūlā. 8.

Indeed, true wisdom and the ability to discriminate between the good and the bad cannot be learnt without the company of and association with good and virtuous people (because such company or association is a practical method to learn these virtues and see them in action). And such a fortunate opportunity of having contact, company or association with good, saintly and holy men (known as “*satasaṅga*”) is not possible without the grace of Lord Ram (i.e. without the blessing of Lord God). (7)

Verily, ‘*satasaṅga*’ is the root of all happiness and joy, of all welfare and well-being, both spiritually and temporally.

Such contact with virtuous people is akin to having fruits for all endeavours because it culminates in spiritual successes (by way of attaining bliss, peace, liberation and deliverance) as well as temporal gains (by way of general improvement in one’s character, actions, behaviour, thinking and lifestyle that brings in fame and reputation).

All other methods are merely like flowers (as they may look very attractive and colourful, and may also give temporary fame and signs of happiness, but they do not provide any solid nourishment to the soul and neither are they permanent). (8)

सठ सुधरहिं सतसंगति पाई । पारस परस कुधात सुहाई ॥ ९ ॥

बिधि बस सुजन कुसंगत परहीं । फनि मनि सम निज गुन अनुसरहीं ॥ १० ॥

saṭha sudharahim satasaṅgati pāī. pārasa parasa kudhāta suhāī. 9.  
bidhi basa sujana kusaṅgata parahīm. phani mani sama nija guna  
anusarahīm. 10.

Even the wicked, evil, mischievous and unscrupulous creatures are modified and transmuted for good under the positive and auspicious effects of contact with and company of saints and virtuous people just like iron that is converted into gold by the mere contact with the ‘*pārasa*’, or the ‘philosopher’s stone’. (9)

On the other hand, if virtuous and saintly people come in contact with evil and wicked people by ill fate or unfortunate circumstance, they still are able to maintain their noble virtues and characters instead of being tainted by the evilness of their unfortunate company just as the ‘*Mani*’ (gem) present on the hood of a special class of serpents is not affected by the poison of the host snake<sup>1</sup>. (10)

[<sup>1</sup>A special species of snake secretes a thick sap from the cells of the skin on its hood. This viscous secretion solidifies and glows in darkness. It is believed that these snakes see their path in its light when they move out from their holes in search of food. The idea is that albeit the snake is very poisonous, the gem manages to retain its glow and shine; it is not darkened by the thick dark poison present in the mouth of the snake which surely spills over when the snake bites its victim.

In like manner, virtuous saints are able to maintain their virtuousness inspite of the evil company that surrounds them. But howbeit, the wicked company that surrounds them gains by its association with these saintly people just as the snake gains its sight in the presence of the *Mani*.]

बिधि हरि हर कबि कोबिद बानी । कहत साधु महिमा सकुचानी ॥ ११ ॥  
 सो मो सन कहि जात न कैसें । साक बनिक मनि गुन गन जैसें ॥ १२ ॥

bidhi hari hara kabi kōbida bānī. kahata sādhu mahimā sakucānī. 11.  
 sō mō sana kahi jāta na kaisēm. sāka banika mani guna gana jaisēm. 12.

Even the Creator (Bidhi; Lord Brahma), Hari (Lord Vishnu), Har (Lord Shiva), expert poets and scholars who are wise and well-versed in the knowledge of qualities that are deemed to be excellent and exemplary, feel hesitant to speak of the immensity of glories and the profound effects of wonderful characters and noble virtues of such saints and pious people [11],-----

-----then say how can I (Tulsidas) ever enumerate them or tell about them fully just like the case of a vegetable merchant or hawker who can never be expected, by any count or imagination, to ever be able to tell the value of a priceless gem. (11)

[In other words, Tulsidas just gives a hint of the greatness of saints and holy men, and the rewards one can get by being associated with them, by keeping their company and contact. For in all sooth and without gainsay their greatness and goodness is so huge and unmeasurable that even the most learned and wise are unable to describe them.]

दो०. बंदउँ संत समान चित हित अनहित नहिं कोइ ।  
 अंजलि गत सुभ सुमन जिमि सम सुगंध कर दोइ ॥ ३ ( क ) ॥

dōhā.

banda'um̐ santa samāna cita hita anahita nahim̐ kō'i.  
 aṅjali gata subha sumana jimi sama sugandha kara dō'i. 3 (a).

I (Tulsidas) bow my head most reverentially before saints and holy men of immaculate virtues and noble characters, who have equanimity and maintain evenness of mind and sub-conscious under all circumstances (samāna cita), who have no friend who will favour them or any enemy who would harm their interests ("hita anahita nahim̐ kō'i"; because they treat everyone alike and see the same Atma or pure consciousness in all of them)—just like the case of the flower that lends its fragrance equally to the hand that had torn it away from its tree which was its habitat (i.e. harmed the flower by shearing it from its home and depriving it of further nutrition and chance to live) and the hand that kindly, lovingly and caringly holds it in its palm. [To wit, just like this flower, a saintly person wishes good of all—both of those who harbour ill-will against him as well as of those who like and serve him.] (Doha no. 3 a)

संत सरल चित जगत हित जानि सुभाउ सनेहु ।  
बालबिनय सुनि करि कृपा रामचरन रति देहु ॥ ३ ( ख ) ॥

santa sarala cita jagata hita jāni subhā'u sanēhu.  
bālabinaya suni kari kṛpā rāmacarana rati dēhu. 3 (b).

True saints are of a pure and simple heart, without any kind of deceit, conceit or pretensions whatsoever. They are universally a well-wisher of the world at large, and never think of any harm to it.

Recalling their kind and gracious nature and their natural affection for all the creatures, wishing the good of all without exception, Tulsidas says that he is inspired and encouraged to pray to them so that they can hear his earnest child-like plea and grant him the boon of having steady and robust devotion and affection for the holy feet of Lord Ram (who is the revered deity of Tulsidas). (Doha no. 3 b)

(1.2) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand Doha no. 6:

दो०. जड़ चेतन गुन दोषमय बिस्व कीन्ह करतार ।  
संत हंस गुन गहहिं पय परिहरि बारि बिकार ॥ ६ ॥

dōhā.

jaṛa cētana guna dōṣamaya bisva kīnha karatāra.  
santa hansa guna gahahiṁ paya parihari bāri bikāra. 6.

The Creator has made this mortal world consisting of animate and inanimate creatures in such a way that it has both the good and the bad qualities in varying proportions. But true saints are those who, like the legendary Swan, accept only the good virtues and goodness of the world symbolized by pure and un-adulterated milk, while discarding aught and everything that is gross and mundane (i.e. is un-virtuous, unholy and unrighteous) symbolized by water<sup>1</sup>. (Doha no. 6)

[<sup>1</sup>The 'Swan' has a unique quality—it drinks only pure milk and leaves aside its pollutants or adulterations such as additional water that is used to dilute it to increase its volume, as done by milk merchants to get more money from the same quantity of pure milk. Saints accept all that is pure and holy, and simply neglect aught that is naught.]

(1.3) Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 45—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 46:

संतन्ह के लच्छन रघुबीरा । कहहु नाथ भव भंजन भीरा ॥ ५ ॥



santanha kē lacchana raghubīrā. kahahu nātha bhava bhanjāna bhīrā. 5.

Narad said to Lord Ram—‘Oh Lord Raghubir (Ram)! You are the destroyer or eliminator or dispeller of the fear of this world consisting of an endless cycle of birth and death from which a creature suffers. Please tell me about the virtues and character of saints and pious souls.’ (5)

[The auspicious virtues and noble character of saints has been described by Lord Ram to Bharat, his younger brother, along with other citizens in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 37, till Doha no. 38.

Lord Ram is a personified form of the Supreme Being, and hence is the Lord who is indeed able to free the tormented creature from all his fears. It is only as long as the creature remains separated from the Lord that he has to fear from the trap laid by the world and the cycle of birth and death. Once a creature finds closeness with the supreme Liberator and Vanquisher of all worries, obviously there remains no cause for more fear in him.]

सुनु मुनि संतन्ह के गुन कहऊँ । जिन्ह ते मैं उन्ह कें बस रहऊँ ॥ ६ ॥

sunu muni santanha kē guna kaha'ūṁ. jinha tē main unha kēm basa raha'ūṁ. 6.

Lord Ram replied—‘Oh sage, now listen! I shall narrate the noble characters and good virtues of saints and pious souls by the virtue of which I am humbled by them. [That is, by the auspicious qualities that the saints possess they are able to bring the Lord under their command in a polite way just as a wise man is able to subdue the king and make the latter humble before himself.] (6)

[Lord Ram has enumerated the grand and auspicious virtues and characters of true saints elsewhere also in Ram Charit Manas—in Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 37, till Doha no. 38. We find that more or less the eclectic virtues and qualities that are being described to sage Narad by Lord Ram in the current verses are also reiterated by the Lord to Bharat in the aforesaid verses.]

षट बिकार जित अनघ अकामा । अचल अकिंचन सुचि सुखधामा ॥ ७ ॥

ṣaṭa bikāra jita anagha akāmā. acala akiñcana suci sukhadhāmā. 7.

The saints and pious souls have conquered (i.e. have eliminated) the six legendary spiritual faults<sup>1</sup> that taint the creature and prevent his spiritual elevation.

They are free from sins and have no trace of Kaam (worldly passion, lust, desire).

They are steady and constant in their spiritual path, have a steady mind and a focused intellect that prevents any kind of wavering or dithering for even a moment.

They have inculcated the grand virtue of total and sincere dispassion, detachment and renunciation.

They are pure and incorrupt, internally and externally.

They are therefore deemed to be an abode (i.e. a personified form) of happiness, peace and bliss. (7)

[<sup>1</sup>The six faults or shortcomings in one's character are the following—(i) 'Kaam' or lust, yearning and passions as well as worldly desires; (ii) 'Krodha' or anger, wrathfulness and being vehement; (iii) 'Lobha' or greed and rapacity; (iv) 'Moha' or infatuations, attractions, longing, attachments etc.; (v) 'Mada' or haughtiness, arrogance, hypocrisy; and (vi) 'Matsarya' or jealousy, ill-will, malice, envy.

According to the Mudgal Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 4 of Rig Veda tradition, and Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 10 of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, the six faults, which are considered as enemies of a man, are the following—Kaam, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada and Matsarya.]

अमितबोध अनीह मितभोगी । सत्यसार कबि कोबिद जोगी ॥ ८ ॥

amitabōdha anīha mitabhōgī. satyasāra kabi kōbida jōgī. 8.

Such saints and pious souls have immense wisdom and are highly enlightened.

They have no desires and wants whatsoever.

They remain contented in whatever comes their way, and can cheerfully do with the bare necessities of life, without harbouring any yearning for anything more.

They are steadfast in following the path of truthfulness; they are firm in their principles that think of nothing else but truth.

They are like wise, learned and erudite ascetics. [Ascetics follow the path of truth, and practice meditation and contemplation. They are not at all concerned by the world and its corruptions, but focus their attention on their inner-self to experience the presence of the Consciousness inside their own bosom. They are able to exercise exemplary self-control over their sense organs of perception as well as action. They have no desires and wants, nor any sort of hopes and expectations from this world. From the perspective of spiritualism they are the ones who have attained true realisation of the truth because they have witnessed the presence of the Atma in their own self, and the accompanying bliss, ecstasy and contentedness.] (8)

सावधान मानद मदहीना । धीर धर्म गति परम प्रबीना ॥ ९ ॥

sāvadhāna mānada madahīnā. dhīra dharma gati parama prabīnā. 9.

Saints and pious souls are very careful (in everything they do and think).

They give due respect, honour and credit to others.

They do not have any sense of pride and ego.

They have resilience and forbearance; they are patient, tolerant and courageous.

They are experts in the principles of Dharma (i.e. principles of righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, nobility, ethics and morality), and diligently follow this path. [They are steady in the righteous path of Dharma that they have chosen to follow, and make it a point to carefully and diligently follow it without wavering and demurring.] (9)

[Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 38 and its preceding Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that virtually say the same thing as taught by the Lord to Narad here.]

दो०. गुनागार संसार दुख रहित बिगत संदेह ।  
तजि मम चरन सरोज प्रिय तिन्ह कहूँ देह न गेह ॥ ४५ ॥

dōhā.

gunāgāra sansāra dukha rahita bigata sandēha.  
taji mama carana sarōja priya tinha kahum̐ dēha na gēha. 45.

Saints and pious souls are a treasure-trove of good and auspicious virtues and characters.

They are free from all the miseries, sorrows and torments associated with this mundane world.

[There are countless fears and miseries related to this mundane mortal world. According to Mudgal Upanishad, 4/7 of the Rig Veda tradition, they are the following:--(1) hunger, (2) thirst, (3) grief, (4) Moha (worldly attachments and infatuations leading to a chain of problems and entrapments), (5) horrors of old age, and (6) death.]

They are wise, enlightened and self-realised so much so that they are free from all confusions, doubts, perplexities, consternations and vexations.

Except my holy lotus-like feet, they have affection for neither their own body nor their household, or for that matter, anything else.

[That is, true saints are totally devoted to worshipping me and my holy feet, and nothing is more dear to them than this. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 38 that reiterates the same idea.] (Doha no. 45)

चौ०. निज गुन श्रवन सुनत सकुचाहीं । पर गुन सुनत अधिक हरषाहीं ॥ १ ॥

caupāī.

nija guna śravaṇa sunata sakucāhīm. para guna sunata adhika haraṣāhīm. 1.

True saints and pious souls<sup>1</sup> feel hesitant or shy when they hear themselves being praised and honoured, but feel happy when they hear about the goodness and glories of other.

[This is because they are humble and polite, and are not jealous of other people. Information about other people's goodness and glories is like music for their ears because this awareness generates a positive energy in their own mind and heart. Just like bad news irritates a man, good news should make him feel happy—of course if he is not jealous of the happiness of others, for otherwise this good news will have the same negative impact on his inner-self as actual hearing of a bad news.] (1)

[<sup>1</sup>The present teaching of Lord Ram describing the virtues of true saints is in favour of sage Narad. The Lord has taught on the same subject, i.e. what are the qualities of saints and how do they differ from non-saints, to Bharat in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 38 and Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it. These verses reflect the same characters of true saints that Lord Ram narrates to Narad here. The full text appears below in this book “Ram Geeta” in section 1, sub-section 9.

Briefly, it is stressed in these lines that a saint is one who “has exemplary dispassion towards the sense objects and their sensual temptations in this world; has equanimity and forbearance; is a true renunciate who has inculcated the virtues of complete dispassion, detachment and non-involvement with anything that is concerned with the gross world of material sense objects and its temptations; he has no greed and desires; he neither feels elated or depressed as he practices equanimity and tolerance; he has no fear of any kind; he is kind, gracious, compassionate, polite; he is free from the influences of Maya (delusions); he feels sad when he sees others unhappy, and happy when he sees others also happy; he gives respect to all others but remains humble himself, expecting no honour or praises for himself; he is calm and composed, polite and cheerful; is simple, humble, un-pretentious and friendly; he remains unmoved, calm and poised whether he is being criticized or praised.”

It should also be noted that these auspicious virtues are also present in devotees of the Lord, and if we examine Lord Ram's listing of nine forms of Bhakti that he taught Sabari in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line 4 that precedes Doha no. 35—to Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 36, we will find a remarkable resemblance between the virtues of saints and those of devotees of the Lord. That is the reason why Lord Ram says that both saints and devotees are very close and dear to his heart—reference: (i) Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 35; (ii) Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 36; (iii) Uttar Kand, Doha no. 38; (iv) Uttar Kand, Doha no. 114.]

सम सीतल नहिं त्यागहिं नीती । सरल सुभाउ सबहि सन प्रीती ॥ २ ॥

sama sītala nahim tyāgahim nīti. sarala subhā'u sabahi sana prīti. 2.

The saints and pious souls are even-minded, have equanimity, forbearance and tolerance. Therefore, they remain calm, poised, unruffled, placid and tranquil inspite of all the turmoil and provocations that they have to face. Verily, they never abandon the right path and the right course under any circumstance.

They are simple, polite, humble and unpretentious by their inherent nature.

They are friendly towards all, and love all the creatures. (2)

जप तप ब्रत दम संजम नेमा । गुरु गोबिंद बिप्र पद प्रेमा ॥ ३ ॥

japa tapa brata dama sanjama nēmā. guru gōbinda bipra pada prēmā. 3.

The saints and pious souls are very particular to be diligent in following the auspicious path as advised by the scriptures, such as to do Japa (repetition of the Lord's holy name), Tapa (doing penance and observing austerity), Brat (keeping vows and steadfastly following the path of righteousness and probity no matter what comes), Dam and Sanyam (observing or practicing self-restraint of the sense organs and the mind), and Nem (faithfully keeping the right religious path and observing sacraments and other religious observances).

They should have affection and dedication for the holy feet of the Guru (their moral preceptor, guide and teacher), Govind (Lord God), and Vipra (Brahmins; the learned and elderly in society). [The idea is that they should be ready to serve them faithfully and diligently, with eagerness and cheer, and not as a burden on them. This service will stand them in good stead because when the teacher, the Lord and the learned Brahmin are pleased with them, they will bless the saint with all good virtues and long-term well-being.] (3)

श्रद्धा छमा मयत्री दाया । मुदिता मम पद प्रीति अमाया ॥ ४ ॥

śrad'dhā chamā mayatrī dāyā. muditā mama pada prīti amāyā. 4.

The saints and pious souls should have the following auspicious virtues in them—they must have 'Shraddha' (faith and trust in the Lord and in their Atma, the pure Consciousness that represents the Supreme Consciousness known as Brahm residing in their own self), 'Kshama' (the grand virtue of forgiveness), 'Mayatri' (friendship, brotherhood), and 'Daya' (mercy, compassion).

They should be always 'Mudita' (to remain always cheerful and happy; to not feel depressed and unhappy).

They should have affection and dedication in my (Lord Ram's) holy feet. [It must be remembered here that Lord Ram is not trying to eulogise himself and preaching self-praise by telling others to bow before him and pay their obeisance to him as if he were some emperor who will punish the non-worshipper. Lord Ram is not a human being that this can be expected from him. He is an incarnate Supreme Being who is advising the world what to do and what to avoid if one wishes to be counted as being a saintly and holy person who is worthy of respect and honour.]

(4) They should be free from all 'Maya' (delusions and their attendant problems).

विरति बिबेक बिनय बिग्याना । बोध जथारथ बेद पुराना ॥ ५ ॥

birati bibēka binaya bigyānā. bōdha jathāratha bēda purānā. 5.

The saints and pious souls should also have the following auspicious and grand virtues in them—‘Virati’ (detachment and dispassion from all attachments and gross sense objects of the mundane world, their pleasures and comforts, desire for self-gratification, etc.), ‘Vivek’ (wisdom, rationality, power to discriminate between the wrong and the right), ‘Vinai’ (politeness, humility, civility, courteousness, dignity), and ‘Vigyan’ (analytical mind and intellect, insight, deep understanding),

They should have a ‘Bodha’<sup>1</sup> (awareness and understanding) of what are the true and essential teachings of the primary ancient scriptures such as the Vedas and the Purans. (5)

[<sup>1</sup>The word “Bodha” can be added to the list of other independent virtues such as Virati, Vivek, Vinai and Vigyan. In this case, ‘Bodha’ would mean enlightenment and realisation of the truth of the ‘self’ as the pure conscious soul known as the Atma, that this individual soul is a microcosmic form of the cosmic Soul known as the Parmatma, and that true liberation and deliverance is freedom from ignorance and delusions that had hitherto prevented this enlightenment and realisation.]

दंभ मान मद करहिं न काऊ । भूलि न देहिं कुमारग पाऊ ॥ ६ ॥

dambha māna mada karahim na kā'ū. bhūli na dēhim kumārāga pā'ū. 6.

The saints and pious souls should never have even a trace of such negative qualities as ‘Dambha’ (pretensions, deceit, conceit, wickedness, crookedness, cunning, falsehood and lies), ‘Maan’ and ‘Mada’ (pride, ego, vanity, arrogance, haughtiness, hypocrisy etc.).

They must never, even by mistake, put their feet in a path that is unholy, unrighteous, inauspicious, improper, corrupt, unethical and immoral.

[Which is such a path? The simple answer is that path which is not sanctioned by the scriptures, when one’s inner voice of conscience revolts should one inadvertently step on a path or wishes to follow it under worldly temptations, is the path that all true saints are ordained to avoid as it was a poison for them. Any deed or action, any thought and view, anything in life that is not good for the spiritual welfare and upliftment of the creature, any path that leads to his entrapment instead of freedom, is the wrong path for him.] (6)

गावहिं सुनहिं सदा मम लीला । हेतु रहित परहित रत सीला ॥ ७ ॥

gāvahim sunahim sadā mama līlā. hētu rahita parahita rata sīlā. 7.

Saints and pious souls should spend their time in singing, narrating and preaching, as well as hearing and discussing my divine deeds and stories.

They are always eager to do well of others in a kind and gracious manner, without any consideration or reward in mind, without exploiting such help later on to put some pressure on the person helped earlier, or to go around boasting of their good deed or action to get milage from it.

[That is, they do not help others with vested interest in mind. They do not expect to be reciprocated later on. They do not help others to oblige them, but out of their inherent temperament to be kind and helpful towards others who are in need and are distressed. They believe that by helping others and alleviating their suffering to the best of their abilities, they are serving the Lord God—because they have developed a holistic view of existence in as much as they see the same Atma in all the creatures, and know that this Atma is nothing but their Lord in an invisible and subtle form. So, they believe that helping others is equivalent to serving the Lord directly. That is why they are polite and courteous when helping others—as they are undertaking this auspicious deed out of their own free will and not out of compulsion, and therefore they should not be rude and insult the Atma of the person they are helping because that would be tantamount to insulting the Lord.] (7)

मुनि सुनु साधुन्ह के गुन जेते । कहि न सकहिं सारद श्रुति तेते ॥ ८ ॥

muni sunu sādhunha kē guna jētē. kahi na sakahim sārada śruti tētē. 8.

Listen sage (Narad)! The virtues and glories of saints and pious persons are so immense and intense that they cannot sufficiently be narrated and explained even by Saarad (i.e. goddess Saraswati, the patron deity of knowledge, wisdom, speech) and the Srutis (Vedas, so called because they were transmitted by the process of speaking and hearing). (8)

(1.4) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 37—to Doha no. 38:

संतन्ह कै महिमा रघुराई । बहु बिधि बेद पुरानन्ह गाई ॥ २ ॥

santanha kai mahimā raghurā'ī. bahu bidhi bēda purānanha gā'ī. 2.

Bharat said to Lord Ram, ‘Oh merciful Lord! The numerous great and eclectic virtues and divine qualities of ‘Sants’—i.e. saints and saintly people, those persons who are virtuous, noble, pious and holy, those whose hearts and mind are pure, those who have risen above the grossness of this mudane world and realized the truth of existence, those who have good virtues as their dominant character, those who are the torch-bearers of the principles laid down in the scriptures, those whose lives are exemplary and worthy of emulation—have been described, enumerated and expounded in a variety of ways in the scriptures such as the Vedas and the Purans. (2)

[Lord Ram is addressed as ‘Raghu-raai’, meaning ‘a king of the Raghu dynasty’. The address of a ‘king’ implies that since you are a king, it is ordained upon

you to teach the virtues of goodness to your all your subjects and citizens. That is why the words ‘Jana Sukha-dai’ have been used to address Lord Ram in Chaupai line no. 1 above. These two words literally mean ‘the Lord who gives happiness to his subjects’.]

श्रीमुख तुम्ह पुनि कीन्ह बड़ाई । तिन्ह पर प्रभुहि प्रीति अधिकाई ॥ ३ ॥

śrīmukha tumha puni kīnhi barāī. tinha para prabhuhi prīti adhikāī. 3.

Even you have often praised them, and their auspicious nature and honourable qualities with your own holy mouth<sup>1</sup>. You have great affection for them, are favourably inclined towards them, and are especially pleased with them. (3)

[<sup>1</sup>The word ‘Sri-Mukha’ has two parts: ‘Sri’ meaning one who is honourable and revered, and ‘Mukha’ meaning the mouth. Hence, this word literally means the mouth of someone who is honourable and revered. The word spoken by such a person is said to be holy and well-respected. Lord Ram is an incarnate Supreme Being, and hence whatever he says is indeed holy and well-respected.

The word ‘Sri’ is usually employed as a mark of great respect for those who are wise and respected. It is also a metaphor for wealth as it is one of the many names of goddess Laxmi, the patron deity of material prosperity and wealth. Anyone who teaches is deemed to be a treasury of knowledge, wisdom, erudition and sagacity—noble virtues which are equivalent to worldly treasures. Since Lord Ram is poised to elucidate about the grand virtues of saints, and since these words of wisdom are no less spiritually important than pearls and gems of priceless value, the Lord’s mouth from which such words would emerge is compared to ‘Sri’—a treasure trove of spiritual wealth!

When Lord Ram begins to teach the glorious virtues and divine characters of saints and those who are pious and spiritually evolved, it will be equivalent to opening of the door of spiritual treasury for everyone to grab by the fistful, ‘by the mindful’ so to say—because good advice and wisdom is accepted by the mind and not by the physical body, and this treasure is stored in the mind so that it can be retrieved whenever needed by one during the course of his life as a source for guidance and advice.]

सुना चहउँ प्रभु तिन्ह कर लच्छन । कृपासिंधु गुन ग्यान बिचच्छन ॥ ४ ॥

sunā caha'um̐ prabhu tinha kara lacchana. kṛpāsindhu guna gyāna bicacchana. 4.

I want to hear about them. Oh kind Lord! You are an ocean of all good virtues and a treasure trove of right knowledge and wisdom. [In other words, you will be able to properly enumerate them for me, and what you say will bear a stamp of authority.] (4)

[The grand and magnificent virtues of ‘Sants’ (saints) have been expounded in detail at a number of places in the scriptures elsewhere also.

A brief list is as follows—



(a) *Adhyatma Ramayan* of sage Veda Vyas, Aranya Kand, canto 3, verse no. 37-39, describes the characteristics of a truly pious and holy person.

(b) Goswami Tulsidas' *Ram Charit Manas*, in the following assorted places—  
 (i) Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-7 that precede Doha no. 2; (ii) Baal Kand, Doha no. 3 and Chaupai line nos. 5-12 that precede it; (iii) Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 7; (iv) Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 45, till Doha no. 46; (v) Uttar Kand, Chanda line nos. 13-16 that precedes Doha no. 14; (vi) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precede Doha no. 37, to Doha no. 38; (vii) Doha no. 46 and its preceding Chaupai line nos. 2-8 that precedes Doha no. 46.

(c) Goswami Tulsidas' *Vairagya Sandipani*—verse no. 8-33.

(d) In the *Upanishads* also, there are numerous instances when the eclectic qualities and grand auspicious virtues of saintly, holy and pious people are enumerated. Some of the examples are the following—(i) Shatyani Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, verse no. 19, 25; (ii) Shandilya Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Cantos 1, Section 1-2; (iii) Sanyas Upanishad of Sam Veda, Canto 2, verse nos. 1, 55-57, 60; (iv) Jabal Darshan Upanishad of Sam Veda, Canto 1, verse nos. 4-6; Canto 2, verse no. 1; (v) Kaivalya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 2.]

संत असंत भेद बिलगाई । प्रनतपाल मोहि कहहु बुझाई ॥ ५ ॥

santa asanta bhēda bilagā'ī. pranatapāla mōhi kahahu bujhā'ī. 5.

Oh Lord who cares for those who have taken shelter with thee! Tell me the different virtues, attributes, qualities and nature of saints and non-saints in such a comprehensive way that a clear distinction can be made between the two of them (i.e. between the saints and non-saints), and I can properly understand them without any ambiguity.' (5)

[The last word 'bujhā'ī' means to explain things in such a way that the listener fully understands them, and has no ambiguity about them.]

संतन्ह के लच्छन सुनु भ्राता । अगनित श्रुति पुरान बिख्याता ॥ ६ ॥

santanha kē lacchana sunu bhrātā. aganita śruti purāna bikhyātā. 6.

[Then Lord Ram enumerated the grand positive virtues of saints so that not only is the query of Bharat satisfied but such knowledge can also help others to be enlightened about them. The Lord then goes on to describe the negative qualities of non-saints. This helps to bring into focus the difference between the two types of persons: the saints and the non-saints. The contrast between the characters of the two becomes very evident. It helps a person to determine with whom to have relations in life and whom to avoid; or whom to follow as an ideal and whom to neglect in life.]

The Lord said—‘Listen brother. The auspicious and divine virtues of saints are countless (i.e. it is not possible to list them all here, but still I’ll tell you the main ones), and they are famed in the scriptures such as the Vedas and the Purans. (6)

[Bharat asked the Lord to tell him the virtues and characteristic qualities of saints and non-saints in a comprehensive manner. The Lord therefore stresses that it will take an independent tome to enumerate all the virtues and glorious characters of them if one were to list all of them and explain all of them exhaustively. So it will be better to outline only the salient features at present. Bharat must realise this therefore, and should not think that the salient features or important virtues that the Lord was about to narrate to him are all there is to it. There are countless more of them, but if one becomes aware of the important ones he can automatically get an idea of what the rest would be based on common sense. The auspicious virtues enumerated herein now act as the basis or foundation for the rest of the virtues which are not expressly mentioned here as they are more like off-shoots of the primary ones which are enumerated now.]

संत असंतन्हि कै असि करनी । जिमि कुठार चंदन आचरनी ॥ ७ ॥  
काटइ परसु मलय सुनु भाई । निज गुन देइ सुगंध बसाई ॥ ८ ॥

santa asantanhi kai asi karanī. jimi kuṭhāra candana ācaranī. 7.  
kāṭa'i parasu malaya sunu bhāī. nija guna dē'i sugandha basāī. 8.

The difference between a saint and a non-saint is like the relationship between an axe and sandalwood<sup>1</sup>. The axe tries to cut and harm the sandalwood tree, but the latter is so kind and gracious that it lends its sweet fragrance to its cutter, the axe. (7-8)

[<sup>1</sup>The axe has the natural habit of cutting trees; to ‘cut’ is the axe’s job; it’s natural to it. It can’t act otherwise. On the other hand, the sandalwood has the natural habit of lending its sweet fragrance to anything that comes in contact with it—it’s its natural habit.

Both of them, the axe and the sandalwood, act according to their natural and inborn temperament and instincts. The merciless axe always harms the sandalwood tree by cruelly cutting it into pieces, while the sandalwood is so forgiving, tolerant and graceful that instead of cursing the axe and vowing vengeance against it, it lends its sweet fragrance to the latter as a token of a welcome gift.

Likewise, true saints are always forgiving, tolerant, calm, understanding, merciful and gracious, spreading their goodness all around them like the sandalwood that spreads its fragrance wherever it is present. On the other hand, the non-saint is a cause of torments and miseries wherever he is, irrespective of whether or not he has anything to gain by harming or causing pain to others. This fundamental difference in attitude sums up the difference between a saint and a non-saint. ]

दो०. ताते सुर सीसन्ह चढ़त जग बल्लभ श्रीखंड ।  
अनल दाहि पीटत घनहिं परसु बदन यह दंड ॥ ३७ ॥

dōhā.

tātē sura sīsanha caṛhata jaga ballabha śrīkhaṇḍa.  
anala dāhi pīṭata ghanahim̐ parasu badana yaha daṇḍa. 37.

[Though the sandalwood does not curse the axe, but Mother Nature does not spare the axe from being punished. How? This is explained now.]

The sandalwood retains its fragrance and is used as an offering to the fire sacrifice and for other auspicious needs, but the face (cutting edge) of the axe is put in the fire and beaten by a heavy hammer to sharpen its edge. (Doha no. 37)

[In spite of being deformed and dismembered, the cut pieces of the sandalwood tree are regarded fit and holy to be used in fire sacrifices. This is an exception—because normally anything that is cut and injured is deemed unholy and unfit for this purpose as it is regarded as polluted. Even when animal sacrifices were done in ancient times, a sacrificial animal was closely examined for any physical deformities, as only a healthy and perfect sample was deemed fit for offering as sacrifice during the rituals. These virtually ‘injured (cut) pieces’ of the sandalwood which should have been deemed unfit for offering to the sacrificial fire are instead used willingly. This is tantamount to Mother Nature praising it for its goodness and virtuous character of forgiveness and tolerance.

As opposed to the sandalwood, the axe is put in blazing fire and hammered hard to sharpen its edges each day after the daily grind of cutting trees. It is a metaphoric way of severely punishing it.

There is another interpretation of this example of the sandalwood and the axe. The sandalwood tree gives out more intense fragrance when it is cut. This is due to effusing of sweet fragrant sap when the tree and its branches are cut. The tree is located at a single place, but the pieces that are cut from it are taken to different places where they spread their fragrance. This is a metaphoric way of saying that saints are able to influence a large section of society in spite of their remaining at one place.

But the irony is that the axe, which comes directly in the contact of the sandalwood and is fortunate to get its fragrance and sap smeared on its surface, gets put in the fire and beaten mercilessly. It never benefits from this holy contact. Thus, non-saints are so unfortunate that even if they have the good fortune of being in direct touch of great saints, they are unable to benefit from this luck, and continue to suffer in this world and heaped with ignominy.

Tulsidas’ another classical work known as the ‘Dohawali’ has verse that uses a metaphor to describe the difference between a saint and a non-saint by using the metaphor of the birds known as Chakor and Chakva as follows—

Goswami Tulsidas’ Dohawali, Doha no. 194—

रघुबर कीरति सज्जननि सीतल खलनि सुताति ।  
ज्योँ चकोर चय चक्कवनि तुलसी चाँदनि राति ॥

‘Raghubar kirati sajjanani sital khalani sutaati, jyom̐ chakor chaya chakkavani tulsi chaandani raati’.

“The full moon night is a provider of comfort, solace, peace and joy to the bird called Chakor, while it is tormenting for the bird called Chakava.

Similarly, Tulsidas says that the glories, the fame and the divine stories of Lord Sri Ram provide peace, tranquility, happiness and joy to good people (gentlemen; those who are pure and gentle at heart, those who are pious, holy, noble and spiritually inclined), but the holy name of the Lord and his divine stories (or any talk about him and even the mention of him) creates torments, annoyance, irritation and heart-burn among miscreants and evil people.”

The Chakva is the ruddy goose or an ostrich. The Chakor is the Indian red-legged partridge. The same light of the full moon appears to torment the Chakva while it pleases the Chakor. The Chakor feels happy at the sight of the moon, while the Chakva shuns it.

These two birds are used as metaphors to describe how the divine stories of Lord Ram—and for that matter any thing related to spiritualism—is liked by saintly and noble people, but abhorred by non-saintly and wicked people. It also emphasizes how the same story is interpreted differently by these people.

Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 16 says—“Lord Sri Ram manifested in this world like the full moon coming up in the eastern horizon to give happiness to saintly people and act like the frost or snow for the lotus flower symbolizing those who are wicked and evil.” The same lotus blooms when it sees the full moon in an ordinary night, but it shrivels and dies when the same moon rises in a night that is biting cold, when there is frost and it begins to snow. In the present context it means that the same story of Lord Ram gives immense pleasure and spiritual comfort to those who are noble and saintly, while tormenting and annoying those who are evil and wicked.

Evil, sinful, pervert and wicked people have a natural tendency to see the wrong side of everything. They are compared to the bird Chakva which is angry when the full moon rises on the horizon because it torments this bird. While this moon is welcomed by the rest of the creatures, this is the only bird which abhors it, hates it, and treats the full moon with utter disdain and contempt.

Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 64 says “cool (good, pleasant) advice that should have been soothing and comforting (for Sita) appeared to torment her like the fire of hell just as the case of the Chakva which feels extremely unhappy and agitated during the night of the full moon of the Sharad Purnima (though this moon provides comfort, peace, solace and happiness to the rest of the world)”.

In Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 1, Lord Shiva tells his divine consort Uma that—“Lord Ram’s divine glories and eclectic qualities are extremely sublime, and are very mysterious and enigmatic—i.e. they are not easily understandable by all. While saints and wise people who hear them and do understand them develop spiritual wisdom and the virtue of renunciation, those who are of low and corrupt intellect, those who are opposed to the Lord and have no spiritual inclination or desire to follow the righteous path of Dharma (proper thought and noble intentions in life) prick holes in it and twist the story to suit their vested interests. They therefore get sucked in the endless vortex of delusions and confusions, while the saintly people find liberation and deliverance from the same story.”

For instance, saintly persons find in the story the nectar-like message of the importance of having devotion and submission for the Lord as an easy means of attaining spiritual emancipation and salvation; they analyse the different aspects of the story and pick up gems of spiritual wisdom and countless advices for leading a life that is auspicious, righteous, noble and holy; they read the story and hear it being told as a tool for obtaining peace, solace, succour and comfort for their mind and heart.

The wicked people and those with pervert mind find countless faults in it and point out so many taints in the character of Lord Ram. They treat it as some fictional writing which is meant to entertain.]

चौ०. बिषय अलंपट सील गुनाकर । पर दुख दुख सुख सुख देखे पर ॥ १ ॥

caupāṭi.

biṣaya alampaṭa sīla gunākara. para dukha dukha sukha sukha dēkhē para. 1.

Saints and pious people do not get indulgent, engrossed and entangled in the material objects of the senses in the world and their temptations of pleasure and comfort. They are a treasury of politeness and good virtues. They feel sorrowful and miserable at the sorrows and miseries of others, and delighted at seeing others happy. (1)

[The word ‘Vishaya’ (biṣaya) refer to the charms and temptations of the objects of the senses in the material world. This concept is closely related to another spiritual fault—known as ‘Vasana’ which refers to the desire of the sense organs for self gratification and yearning to derive pleasure and comfort from their respective objects in the external world. Thus, not to be entangled in these things is one of the main signs of saints.

Does it mean that one should run away from the world, when it is said in the scriptures that this world is governed by the law of Karma—i.e. as long as one lives in this world he must do something to survive as well as to chalk out a path for his future. The trick is to continue doing deeds and maintain one’s stable position in the world that has come to a person’s share, but to remain neutral and dispassionate towards everything in this mundane and mortal world, not to get emotionally and sentimentally involved in or attached with anything, to do everything to the best of one’s ability without worrying for the result and then offering both the deed as well as its consequences as an offering to the Lord God, and so on and so forth. If one is able to successfully lead a life in this exalted way then it is as good as actually and physically renouncing it and becoming a hermit. There is no need to make the body suffer by the hardships of the forest if one can remain in the household in the physical terms but remain detached from all temptations of the world and the sense organs internally at the mental and emotional plane.

To have sympathy and empathy are another two virtues a saint possesses. Since he is merciful, compassionate and loving, since he sees his Lord in each living being, since he is enlightened and realised enough to see the same Atma (soul) in all the creatures, these virtues come to him naturally. This fact is endorsed in the next line.]

सम अभूतरिपु बिमद बिरागी । लोभामरष हरष भय त्यागी ॥ २ ॥

sama abhūtaripu bimada birāgī. lōbhāmarāṣa harāṣa bhaya tyāgī. 2.

They maintain poise and equilibrium of mind and thoughts so much so that they have practice exemplary level of equanimity, neutrality, dispassion, a sense of evenness and detachment along with the grand virtues of forbearance and tolerance. They treat all the creatures and things equally, with stoic indifference. They do not treat anyone as a friend nor someone else as an enemy. [Since they treat everyone alike, naturally such a person has no enemy, as all are his friend.]

They are free from the negative quality of Mada (ego, pride, arrogance, haughtiness, hypocrisy and vanity). They, on the other hand, have an abundance of the positive virtue of Vairagya (renunciation). They abandon Lobha (greed), Krodha (anger), Harsha (feeling of joy from worldly gains) and Bhaya (fear from anything related to this mundane gross existence). (2)

[Obviously, when a person practices exemplary equanimity, neutrality and detachment on the one hand, and treats everyone, everything and every situation alike, there is no occasion for such negative traits as listed in this verse to ever find a foothold in his mind, sub-conscious and heart.

When a man has no ‘Mada’ he will be humble, polite, simple, readily approachable and affable. Since he treats everyone alike, he has no enemy or friend. Since he has no enemy, he has no ‘Bhaya’. Since he practices ‘Vairagya’ (i.e. has renounced everything and all sorts of attachments and infatuations), he has no ‘Lobha’. Since he has no ‘Lobha’, he is eternally contented. All these go together to make him free from ‘Krodha’ and ‘Haraha’ because the former (Krodha) arises when a person’s desires are not fulfilled or when his ego is hurt, and the latter (Harsh) arises in the opposite situation. Practice of equanimity takes care of them both.]

**कोमलचित दीनह पर दाया । मन बच क्रम मम भगति अमाया ॥ ३ ॥**

kōmalacita dīnanha para dāyā. mana baca krama mama bhagati amāyā. 3.

Their mind and sub-conscious as well as their nature are extremely supple, mild, tender, affable and calm. They have mercy, sympathy, empathy and compassion for the lowly and the humble, for those who suffer and are miserable.

They have the purest form of Bhakti (devotion, dedication, submission) for me, and their mind and heart, their words and their deeds are all dedicated in this direction. They are free from the influences of Maya (delusions pertaining to this world and its temptations that are entangling for the soul). (3)

[Those who feel the pain of others, and empathize with other creatures and their sufferings, naturally have a compassionate, merciful and tender mind. It is a character of saints—refer also Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 2 where it is said that sage Narad was filled with pity and mercy for Jayant when he saw his miserable condition. The incident is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 1, till Doha no. 2. It so happened that Jayant, the son of Indra, ran from one god to another god seeking protection against an arrow shot at him by Lord Ram for a grave mischief he had committed. Jayant had bitten Sita and made her bleed. No one gave him any protection against the wrath of the Supreme Lord, but when sage Narad saw his pitiful condition he felt mercy for him. This is because Narad was a ‘saint’. He

advised Jayant to go and ask Lord Ram for forgiveness, which is the only method for his safety now.

The concept of ‘Bhakti’ (devotion, dedication, submission and love for the Lord God) has been elaborately described in Ram Charit Manas at countless places. Some of them are the following—

(i) Ayodhya Kand: 2/93/6; 2/131/5-6; 2/137/1; 2/204; 2/219/4-5; 2/265/3; 2/291/1-3; 2/299/203; 2/301/3.

(ii) Aranya Kand: 3/16/2-9; 3/35/7—3/36/7.

(iii) Kishkindha Kand: 4/12/1-2; 4/15/10.

(iv) Sundar Kand: 5/46/1-4, 6—5/46; 5/48/1-7—5/48.

(v) Uttar Kand: 7/14/5-16; 7/46/3; 7/86/1—7/87 Ka; 7/115/11-16; 7/116/1-8—7/120; 7/122/15-19.

In Tulsidas’ collection of verses known as Dohawali, a number of verses are dedicated to the theme of Bhakti—for instance, refer to verse nos. 53-54, 87-88, 126-127, 134-140, 145, 147.

The renowned version of Veda Vyas’ Ramayan, known as ‘Adhyatma Ramayan’, describes Bhakti in its Aranya Kand, Canto 3, verse nos. 37-39, and in Uttar Kand, Canto 7, verse nos. 60-72.

The Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 8, paragraph nos. 12-14 describes Bhakti in a metaphysical perspective.]

सबहि मानप्रद आपु अमानी । भरत प्रान सम मम ते प्रानी ॥ ४ ॥

sabahi mānaprada āpu amānī. bharata prāna sama mama tē prānī. 4.

They honour everyone else and show respect to them, but do not like being honoured and shown undue importance for themselves. Oh Bharat, they are extremely dear to me as if they are my life. (4)

बिगत काम मम नाम परायन । सांति बिरति बिनती मुदितायन ॥ ५ ॥

सीतलता सरलता मयत्री । द्विज पद प्रीति धर्म जनयत्री ॥ ६ ॥

bigata kāma mama nāma parāyana. sānti birati binatī muditāyana. 5.  
sītalatā saralatā mayatrī. dvija pada prīti dharma janayatrī. 6.

They have no desires, wishes, yearnings, passions and lust whatsoever, and therefore no need to fulfill them. They are devoted to my (Lord Ram’s) holy name.

[That is, they remember the Lord at all times in their lives, and silently repeat is divine name constantly. It helps them to ward off evil thoughts from entering their minds. They have eliminated all worldly desires and wants, because only when this is brought into practice can one turn himself to the thoughts of the Lord God. The mind and the heart can’t do these two things simultaneously; it’s either the world or the Lord.]

They are an abode of the eclectic virtues of Shanti (peace, tranquility, serenity), Virati (Vairagya=renunciation, detachment and dispassion), Binati (humility and simplicity), Mudit (cheerfulness, happiness and blissfulness under all circumstances), Sital (calm, self-controlled), and Saral (simple, without pretensions and deceit), Mayatri (friendly).

[Turning away from the world and its temptations automatically makes the mind calm and tranquil. The perceptions of the world have a buffeting affect on the mind and the sub-conscious, and as long as the creature continues to remain indulgent in the world of material sense objects, the mind is constantly pulled in that direction. Then there is the associate problem of the constant nagging of the sense organs of the gross body which is directly related to the equally gross world; they are coparceners in the joint family setup. The Atma of the creature, i.e. the creature's 'true self', is an independent entity, and as long as this Atma allows its self to be under bondage of either of them—the body consisting of the sense organs, and the world of material objects—the creature cannot ever hope to find peace, bliss and happiness. As long as the Atma remains attached to the body and the world, it is affected by their grossness; and when it frees its self from both of them, i.e. when it gains 'Virati', it regains its primary form which is ethereal, subtle and sublime, a form that is characterized by the grand and eclectic virtues of Binati, Mudit, Sital and Saral.]

They have affection for the feet of Brahmins<sup>1</sup>—i.e. they respect those who are elderly, learned and wise in the society.

They are the ones who support, enhance, protect, propagate, and in general act as the crucible that fosters and encourages the grand and glorious virtues of Dharma (righteous and auspicious laws of Nature and God; the tenets of propriety, probity, ethics, morality and nobility in thoughts and conduct). (5-6)

[<sup>1</sup>This word Brahmin is too often misunderstood and misinterpreted to mean a particular member of the society who is supposed to be given respect, no matter what his moral and educational standard is. The real intention is not that even a corrupt, unwise, morally depraved and foolish person should be honoured just because he is born a 'Brahmin'. The intention of the scriptures is never this. In ancient times this was the class of people who were designated to study the scriptures and act as moral and practical guide to the rest of the society. This was envisioned by our ancestors to help regulate the functioning of the society in an orderly manner by dividing the entire working into four clear segments and delineating each segment with a list of duties its members were supposed to do. This prevented clash and duplicity of work, as each of the four classes knew what it is supposed to do. This in effect created a hierarchy in the society, with the learned ones who were known as the 'Brahmins' occupying the upper rung just like a patriarch of a large extended family who oversees the working and welfare of the entire family. A patriarch is an old man, and has the backing of years of experience behind him. Obviously he is the most competent man to give sane and rationale advice to the younger generation. This exactly was the role of the Brahmin.

Even in the modern world, a child is taught to give respect to his elders; its part of his moral education. Hence, 'paying respects to Brahmins' should be understood in the correct perspective.

The salient features of Brahmins are the following—they should possess these noble qualities—(1) 'Riju'-be expert in the Rig and the Yajur Vedas, (2) 'Tapa'-should be involved in doing penances, observing austerities and enduring sufferings for the welfare of the soul and the society, (3) 'Santosh'-be contented and satisfied, (4) 'Kshamaa'-to be forgiving and tolerant, (5) 'Sheel'-to have such virtues as good



character, dignity, decorum and virtuousness, (6) 'Jitendriya'-to have self control over the sense organs, (7) 'Data'-to be a giver, one who sacrifices his own interests for the benefit of others, (8) 'Gyani'-one who is well learned, wise, enlightened and erudite, (9) 'Dayaalu'-to be merciful and compassionate. [Shatpath Brahman.]

An entire Upanishad called Vajra-shuchiko-panishad, belonging to the Sam Veda tradition is devoted to the subject. The eclectic virtues of Brahmins have been expounded in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 3, Brahman 5 as well as in Canto 3, Brahman 8, verse no. 10.

The Param Hans Parivrajak Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, paragraph no. 7 describes in a holistic way the virtues of a true Brahm as the one who is highly wise, self-realised, erudite and enlightened about the Atma and the principles governing the true meaning of Brahm and such religious signs as doing fire sacrifices, wearing the sacred thread and the tuft of hair on the head, observing sacraments etc.

To quote this Upanishad—'A true Brahmin is a wise and enlightened person who treats the Atma, the pure consciousness, as the non-dual Principal of creation (i.e. who regards the Atma as a personification of the supreme Brahm that is non-dual or Advaita and the only supreme Authority of creation), and for whom being steady in his meditation and contemplation as well as spiritual pursuit is the symbolic tuft of hair—such a person is deemed to be cleansed and made holy by whatever he does. This is because all his deeds are deemed to be auspicious and holy. [That is, he need not do special deeds such as fire sacrifices or observing of sacraments in order to wash off his sins or any kind of spiritual taints that might be adhering to him.]

He is deemed to have completed doing all religious and auspicious deeds required to be done by a man.

It must be understood that such an enlightened man is indeed a Brahmin for he is dedicated and devoted to Brahm (the Supreme Being), he is no less than a God, he is indeed a 'Rishi' (or a great sage), he is a 'Tapasvi' (or someone who is well endowed with the glorious virtues of Tapa, i.e. austerity and penance, and is steadfast in observing its tenets), he is the best follower of the tenets of the scriptures and an excellent spiritual aspirant, he is therefore the Guru (guide, teacher and preceptor) for the whole world.

A truly wise, enlightened and self-realised aspirant who understands the implications and import of what has been said above realises the truth of the statement that the pure conscious Atma standing for Brahm is the true identity of his. And therefore such an enlightened man declares 'It (Brahm; Atma; Truth; Consciousness) is me'.

The Pashupat Brahm Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse no. 19 describes who a true Brahmin is as follows—"A true Brahmin is one who wears the Yagya Sutra (the sacred thread worn during the performance of fire sacrifices, especially the symbolic one as narrated in verse no. 16), who employs the Pranav Mantra (i.e. the OM Mantra) for his religious needs (such as when doing Japa or repetition, Yoga or meditation, Dhyan or contemplation, etc.), and who is well-versed in the principles of Brahm Yagya (spiritual practices which are equivalent to a formal fire sacrifice but done in a subtle and symbolic manner which lead directly to the realisation of the supreme cosmic Consciousness and the absolute Truth known as Brahm).

The Gods (the term is a metaphor for the virtues of auspiciousness, righteousness, holiness, divinity, nobility etc.) are to be found in the diligent observance of the principles that define a man as a Brahmin. [That is, if a man is a

true Brahmin as outlined above, he is deemed to be living God in the sense that he would possess all the eclectic virtues that collectively defined as being ‘godly’.]

The Hans (the enlightened Atma, the self-realised and Brahm-realised person) who adheres to the principles of Sutra (i.e. who follows the tenets that lead to Brahm-realisation, who offers his obeisance to the Supreme Being in the manner outlined in this Upanishad, who leads a life like a true Brahmin as described above) is deemed to be doing the Yagya (the fire sacrifice).

There is no difference between the Hans and Pranav. That is, there is no difference between the immaculate Atma, the pure conscious ‘self’ known as the Hans, and the supreme transcendental Brahm known as Pranav. [Brahm is the cosmic Consciousness that produces vibrations of life in the ether that are heard in the form of Naad. These dynamic vibrations in the cosmic ether produce sound that is encapsulated in the monosyllabic word OM. Hence, the OM is a sound form or the cosmic Naad known as Pranav which stands for Brahm because it is the latter which has generated this sound. If the Atma is personified as a divine Swan known as Hans, the supreme cosmic Atma known as Brahm is personified in the form of Pranav which is a cosmic sound called Pranav, and which is represented by the word OM. Refer verse no. 17 and 20 of this Canto 1 of the Pashupat Brahm Upanishad in this context.] (19).”

The Par Brahm Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse nos. 8-13 describe who is a true Brahmin, and verse no. 14 describes who is not. Now, let us examine what these verses say.

First let us see who is not a true Brahmin:--“Verse no. 14 = Those Brahmins who are engrossed merely in performing rituals and observing sacraments, or who are engaged in the mundane affairs of the world are Brahmins only for name’s sake (and not true Brahmins), because they live only to fill their stomachs and enjoy the fame, comforts and pleasures that come with worldly respect. Such people go to hell at the end of their lives.

[That is, they continue to take birth and die again, and during each life they undergo sufferings and miseries that are part and parcel of gross mundane existence. They do not find Mukti or spiritual liberation and deliverance, nor do they find peace and bliss that comes with self and Brahm realisation. They do not have true Gyan, and are only pretending to have it to fulfill their worldly desires. In short, they are not true Brahmins, they are imposters, and they do not do justice to the institution of Brahm-hood. They give the holy stature of being a Brahmin a bad name.

The question arises, who then is a true Brahmin? The answer is self-evident in the foregoing as well as the following verses. That is, only those who have true knowledge of Brahm, and the depth of wisdom and enlightenment to understand what the term ‘Brahm’ is all about, who do not hanker after external purity and formalities but lay stress on inner cleansing and sincerity of purpose are true Brahmins. Such people would not be much bothered about sporting a tuft on the head or wearing the sacred thread to prove that they are Brahmins, but would instead strive to inculcate the glorious virtues that are so typical of those who have become self and Brahm realised, who have really understood the truth and reality of things.] (14).”]

ए सब लच्छन बसहिं जासु उर । जानेहु तात संत संतत फुर ॥ ७ ॥

ē saba lacchana basahiṁ jāsu ura. jānēhu tāta santa santata phura. 7.

All people who have these positive virtues firmly established in their hearts must surely be regarded as saints. (7)

सम दम नियम नीति नहिं डोलहिं । परुष बचन कबहुँ नहिं बोलहिं ॥ ८ ॥

sama dama niyama nīti nahiṁ ḍōlahiṁ. paruṣa bacana kabahūṁ nahiṁ bōlahiṁ. 8.

They have, and practice, the auspicious virtues of Sama and Dama<sup>1</sup> (self control of the senses, and suppression of desires for self gratification as well as for the material world with its temptations, comforts and pleasures).

They never violate the laws of Dharma (probity, propriety, righteousness, ethics, morality, nobility and auspiciousness), and diligently follow them. They never say an angry word to others indicating haughtiness and insult. (8)

[<sup>1</sup>“Sama” is control of the Mana (the wayward mind and the heart), Buddhi (intellect), Chitta (sub-conscious mind and the subtler aspects of the mind and intellect), and Ahankar (sense of pride in the subtle as well as the grosser aspect of the body of the creature), and concentrating their efforts towards the Lord God represented by the Supreme Consciousness and the Absolute Truth of creation at the macro level of creation, and the Atma or the soul of the individual at the micro level.

“Dama” is its associated control of the various sense organs of the body—viz. the five organs of perception (eyes, ears, tongue, nose and skin) and the five organs of action (hand, leg, mouth, excretory and genitals).

It is therefore obvious that ‘Dama’ is control of the grosser aspects of the body of the creature, while ‘Sama’ is the control of his subtle body.

The “Niyam” means regularity and diligence in observance of certain laws and rules that help the spiritual aspirant reach his goal. There are said to be ten Niyams. They have been already explained in this book in a note appended to the Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 80 appearing in Section 1, sub-section no. (8) above that describes the Chariot of God/Dharma Rath as it was narrated by Lord Ram for the benefit of Vibhishan.]

दो०. निंदा अस्तुति उभय सम ममता मम पद कंज ।

ते सज्जन मम प्रानप्रिय गुन मंदिर सुख पुंज ॥ ३८ ॥

dōhā.

nindā astuti ubhaya sama mamatā mama pada kaṇṇa.  
tē sajjana mama prānapriya guna mandira sukha puṇṇa. 38.

They remain unruffled and calm even under the greatest of provocations; they treat praises and insults equally with stoic indifference. They have no attachment and affection for anything or anyone in this world, but for my holy feet. Verily I say that such pious gentlemen are very dear to me (Lord Ram) like one loves one's own self, and are deemed to be a temple of all that is good, virtuous and holy; they become a treasury of peace, happiness and bliss.' (Doha no. 38)

[A true saint is one who treats all alike, and is completely detached from the world; he remains eternally calm and poised; he has no trace of ego and pride in him. He is humility and piety personified. Naturally therefore, he is neither offended when anyone speaks ill of him, nor elated at praises.

His only interest is the Lord; he has only one sort of affection—and that is in the holy feet of the Lord God, who in this case is Lord Ram, a personified form of the Supreme Being. The Lord says that such persons are extremely close and dear to him, and therefore they become a virtual temple of auspicious virtues and a fountainhead of happiness and bliss.]

(1.5) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 46 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it:

[Though primarily the following verses outline the excellent characteristic qualities and eclectic virtues of devotees of Lord God, but they have relevance to our topic of 'saints and their qualities' as well, for saints possess all these qualities in their full bloom. Remember: a true saint and a holy man is invariably one who is a great devotee and lover of Lord God, the Supreme Soul, the Supreme Being and the Supreme Consciousness of this creation, and this unique similarity of a devotee of Lord Ram and a pious saint is without gainsay and without exception.]

चौ०. कहहु भगति पथ कवन प्रयासा । जोग न मख जप तप उपवासा ॥ १ ॥

caupāī.

kahahu bhagati patha kavana prayāsā. jōga na makha japa tapa upavāsā. 1.

Say, what effort is needed to walk on the path of Bhakti, as one need not do Yoga (meditation), Makha (or fire sacrifices; other religious duties and observances), Japa (constant repetition of any holy Mantra or spiritual formula), Tapa (austerity, penance and enduring hardships) or Upavaas (abstinence from food and drink; fasting).

[In other words, the path of Bhakti is extremely easy and simple. It does not require any special effort or incur any encumbrances on the way. It simply needs love, dedication, faith, submission, commitment and devotion for the Lord God. It is as easy as a child loving its mother. No formalities and decorum are needed.] (1)

सरल सुभाव न मन कुटिलाई । जथा लाभ संतोष सदाई ॥ २ ॥

sarala subhāva na mana kuṭilā'ī. jathā lābha santōṣa sadā'ī. 2.

[Now, Lord Ram outlines the basic qualities that one must have to develop Bhakti in his heart, and be successful in its implementation. These are general good qualities a person must have in his life, whether he wishes to have Bhakti or not, as even a cursory reading of these virtues would show that they help the person become a good human being instead of some pervert and evil creature who is no better than an animal.]

Such persons who have Bhakti must have a simple and unpretentious nature which is free from cunning, wickedness, perversions, falsehood, deceit and conceit. They are always contented with whatever they have, not greedying or yearning for more. Hence, they are always satisfied and happy. (2)

मोर दास कहाइ नर आसा । करइ तौ कहहु कहा बिस्वासा ॥ ३ ॥

mōra dāsa kahā'i nara āsā. kara'i tau kahahu kahā bisvāsā. 3.

Say, if one claims to be, on the one hand, my (Lord Ram's) devotee and says that he is dedicated to me, depends upon me, and has no one else as his Lord, but on the other hand expects something from others, or depends upon others—then how can he so claim that he is my true follower, is truly dedicated to me, has true devotion and faith in me and has submitted himself to me in the true sense?

[In other words, a true devotee of the Lord is one who does speak lie, and is completely trustworthy in all actions and words. He must be fully dedicated to the Supreme Lord, and depend upon the Lord as his sole protector and benefactor.] (3)

बहुत कहउँ का कथा बढ़ाई । एहि आचरन बस्य मैं भाई ॥ ४ ॥

bahuta kaha'um' kā kathā baṛhā'ī. ēhi ācarana basya maim bhā'ī. 4.

What more can I (Lord Ram, the incarnate Supreme Being) say; I am committed to love and protect those who have the grand eclectic virtues enumerated above. (4)

बैर न बिग्रह आस न त्रासा । सुखमय ताहि सदा सब आसा ॥ ५ ॥

baira na bigraha āsa na trāsā. sukhamaya tāhi sadā saba āsā. 5.

Such a person must not be inimical to anyone or harbour ill-will and malice towards any person in this world. He should not fight or quarrel with anyone, nor create animosity and hatred. He should not expect anything from anyone, nor should he fear them.

[Since he expects nothing from anyone, hates no one, and has no enemy in this world, it is obvious that he has nothing to fear from anybody. Since he wants nothing, there is no sense of frustration at not having been able to acquire anything, or that someone is preventing him from acquiring it, a situation that leads to jealousy and ill-will.]

For such a dispassionate, detached, enlightened and wise saint, all the directions (i.e. all the corners of the world) are equal and comfortable; they all provide him happiness and joy as he has neither any fear from any quarter nor is he jealous of the prosperity and wealth of others that may cause some degree of inferiority complex or a sense of dearth and want in him. (5)

अनारंभ अनिकेत अमानी । अनघ अरोष दच्छ बिग्यानी ॥ ६ ॥

anārambha anikēta amānī. anagha arōṣa daccha bigyānī. 6.

He does not start doing any deed with an expectation of a reward or favourable result, and hence does it with total detachment with the idea that it is his destiny that has presented itself before him in the form of the situation requiring him to do what he is doing. [And wise and enlightened as he is, he submits all the consequences of his deeds, good or bad, to the Lord God, becoming free from any mental involvement and attendant worries.]

He has no home of his own.

[Here, the reference is to the gross body which all living beings regard as their own truthful self, as well as the gross world which all living beings regard as their habitat. The sacred idea is that a true saint and holy person is he who has become enlightened of the great spiritual fact that the true 'self' is the Atma, the pure cosmic Consciousness that is an ethereal, subtle and sublime entity which has no fixed abode because it is all-pervading and omnipresent in this world as the Holy Spirit. This Atma or Soul is distinct from the gross body, and since the Atma is the person's 'truthful self', he does not regard the body as his identity. Again, such a self-realised person understands that the outside world is transient and delusory, it is a creation of the mind, and it is entrapping and shackling by nature like quicksand or quagmire which sucks anyone in if one puts a leg into it even inadvertently. How can the cosmic Atma for which the whole creation is a habitat, which is all-pervading, all-encompassing, omnipresent, immanent and ethereal by nature limit itself to a gross body or the gross brick-and-mortar house that ignorant people call a 'home'?)

He has no attachment or attractions for anything or anyone; he is not infatuated with them. He is immaculate and sinless. He has no anger and wrathfulness in him. He is an expert in the laws of proper conduct and well-versed in the knowledge of the Truth. He is wise, realised and enlightened. (6)

प्रीति सदा सज्जन संसर्गा । तृन सम बिषय स्वर्ग अपबर्गा ॥ ७ ॥

prīti sadā sajjana sansargā. tṛna sama biṣaya svarga apabargā. 7.

He finds pleasure and happiness in the company of saints, of holy and pious people. He treats all things of the material world of sense objects as being worthless as a reed or grass. For him, the heaven and the world are equal.

[This is primarily because he has realised that the ultimate spiritual truth in this creation is known as the Atma. This Atma is a cosmic ethereal entity known as Consciousness that resides in his own bosom and no where else, that it is this Atma residing in his own self which is also called the Holy Spirit, the Parmatma, the Supreme Being, whom the world calls the Lord God, and that there is no such thing as a separate heaven somewhere in the sky where he will go after death to enjoy some great privileges and physical comfort, or a distinct place called the world where he has to suffer while he lives in it. He realises that all suffering is his own creation; it is his mind that feels that this is causing pain and that is causing happiness. The heaven above is as illusionary as the world under it. The reality is that when the Atma wants to find freedom from all fetters, it can do so instantly by becoming detached from everything. When the body is shed, the Atma is physically liberated from its four walls. Freedom from bondages of spiritual ignorance and delusions is the actual symbolic form of Mukti, or liberation and deliverance, which gives immense happiness, joy, bliss and tranquility to the creature—a situation that is equated to being in heaven. The opposite situation would then obviously create unhappiness and misery. This is equivalent to suffering in this world.] (7)

भगति पच्छ हठ नहिं सठताई । दुष्ट तर्क सब दूरि बहाई ॥ ८ ॥

bhagati paccha haṭha nahim saṭhatā'ī. duṣṭa tarka saba dūri bahā'ī. 8.

Saints prefer to follow the path of Bhakti—having love, devotion, dedication, faith and trust for the Lord God. He keeps a great distance from those who are wicked, evil and pervert, as well as from aimless debates and useless logics that make no sense and are a waste of time and energy. (8)

दो०. मम गुन ग्राम नाम रत गत ममता मद मोह ।  
ता कर सुख सोइ जानइ परानंद संदोह ॥ ४६ ॥

dōhā.

mama guna grāma nāma rata gata mamatā mada mōha.  
tā kara sukha sō'i jāna'i parānanda sandōha. 46.

Only those who remain submerged in the nectar representing my countless virtues and the spiritual ambrosia of my holy name (i.e. always remember them and repeats my divine name), and are free from the entanglements of Mamta (worldly attachments and affections), the tainting effects of Mada (arrogance, haughtiness, hypocrisy, pride of being superior to others, ego), and the fetters of Moha (worldly attractions and infatuations)—verily, such saints know and are able to taste the divine nectar of bliss and happiness of the highest order (that comes naturally with practicing of the above eclectic virtues).” (Doha no. 46)

[The glories of Lord Ram’s holy and divine name have been elaborately narrated in nearly all the magnificent devotional books on the theme of Lord Ram written by Goswami Tulsidas. A summary is as follows—

- (i) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Doha no. 19 and its preceding Chaupai line no. 1, right upto Doha no. 27.
- (ii) Dohawali, verse nos. 1-47, 57-63, 80-81, 95-100, 102-116, 126-140, 150-152, 187.
- (iii) Barvai Ramayan, verse nos. 45-69.
- (iv) Kavitaawali, Uttar Kand, verse nos. 1-125.
- (v) Geetawali, Sundar Kand, verse nos. 40, 42, 44-46.
- (vi) Vinai Patrika, verse nos. 4356, 65-70.

This entire collection has been presented in English by this author in his epic book titled ‘Biography of Lord Ram and the glory of Lord’s Holy Name’, in section 2 of this book.]

(1.6) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 13-16, 21-22 that precede Doha no. 121:

नहिं दरिद्र सम दुख जग माहीं । संत मिलन सम सुख जग नाहीं ॥ १३ ॥  
पर उपकार बचन मन काया । संत सहज सुभाउ खगराया ॥ १४ ॥

nahim daridra sama dukha jaga māhīm. santa milana sama sukha jaga nāhīm. 13.

para upakāra bacana mana kāyā. santa sahaja subhā'u khagarāyā. 14.

On being asked by Garuda (the king of the birds), Kagbhusunda (the saintly-crow) replied thus:-

There is no misery in this world that can be greater than poverty and wants; and there is no happiness, no joy and no blessing greater than having contact or association or communion with a saint in this world. (13)

‘Benefit and good of others’ is always in the speech, thought and deeds of a saint; this is their natural disposition (tendency). (14)

संत सहिं दुख परहित लागी । परदुख हेतु असंत अभागी ॥ १५ ॥



भूर्ज तरू सम संत कृपाला । परहित निति सह बिपति बिसाला ॥ १६ ॥

santa sahaḥiṁ dukha parahita lāgī. paradukha hētu asanta abhāgī. 15.  
bhūrja tarū sama santa kṛpālā. parahita niti saha bipati bisālā. 16.

Saints undergo sufferings for the benefit of others (so that the latter get solace and comfort), while non-saints are so unfortunate that they are the cause of pain and grief of others (even if they do not gain from it). (15)

[To wit, true saints take great care that they are not the cause of any sort of discomfort to others. Instead, they strive to provide solace and happiness to others even if it meant they have to endure sufferance themselves. On the other hand, it is the natural habit of non-saints that they enjoy the suffering of others even if it does not lead to any gain for themselves.]

The merciful and tender-hearted saints and holy people are like the Birch tree, their principal nature being to serve others even if it means great suffering for themselves. (16)

[Saints are compared to the Birch tree because the outer layer of this tree is torn off and beaten to a pulp to make paper and clothes that were worn by sages and hermits in ancient times. In other words, saintly persons would prefer to subject themselves to the greatest of pains if their pain and suffering helps others. The most stellar example of one such saint is king Dadhichi who had given his own bones to the Gods so that they can devise weapons from these bones so as to defeat the demons.]

संत उदय संतत सुखकारी । बिस्व सुखद जिमि इंदु तमारी ॥ २१ ॥

परम धर्म श्रुति बिदित अहिंसा । पर निंदा सम अघ न गरीसा ॥ २२ ॥

santa udaya santata sukhakārī. bisva sukhada jimi indu tamārī. 21.  
parama dharma śruti bidita ahinsā. para nindā sama agha na garīsā. 22.

The rise or advancement of a saint is always the cause of universal joy, happiness and comfort in the world just like the rising of the moon and the sun (indu tamārī)<sup>1</sup> invariably brings joy and delight for the whole world. (21)

It is prescribed in the Vedas (which are the primary scriptures) that the best religious merit a person can acquire is to observe the vow of non-violence (ahinsā)<sup>2</sup>. And (the same Vedas say that) speaking ill of others is a grave sin. (22)

[<sup>1</sup>The sun is called “tamārī” because it destroys darkness, or “Tama”.]

<sup>2</sup>Ahinsa is not limited to abstaining from physical killing of a creature. It involves not doing anything that harms others and causes them pain and grief to them, even if is done subtly and indirectly by one’s thoughts and instructions, or overtly by one’s offensive words, speech, actions and deeds.]

(1.7) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 125:

संत बिटप सरिता गिरि धरनी । पर हित हेतु सबन्ह कै करनी ॥ ६ ॥

santa biṭapa saritā giri dharanī. para hita hētu sabanḥa kai karanī. 6.

You (i.e. sage Kaagbhusund) are fully accomplished and all your desires have been fulfilled. Not only this, you have affection for Lord Ram, and the Lord loves you too.

Oh dear sage! Verily, forsooth and without gainsay, who is more fortunate and privileged in this world than you?<sup>1</sup> (5)

[<sup>1</sup>That is, no living being, including great sages, is as lucky as sage Kaagbhusund. The reason is that Kaagbhusund has been blessed by Lord Ram himself. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 83—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 88.]

Indeed, the deeds and actions of saints, trees, rivers, mountains and the earth are always for the good of others<sup>2</sup>. (6)

[<sup>2</sup>Saints always think of others' good and welfare so much so that they would rather prefer to suffer if it helps others. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 15 that precedes Doha no. 121.]

The trees offer shade, flowers, fruits and seeds to serve other creatures. Even their own bodies are offered to others by way of firewood and construction material. The skin of the Birch tree is used to make paper and clothes that were worn by hermits in ancient times. A host of birds and insects find their dwelling place in them.

Rivers are the lifelines of human civilisation. They are homes to a complete ecosystem consisting of aquatic plants and animals. Some of them are regarded as very holy: for instance river Ganges and river Yamuna.

Quite like the rivers, the mountains give shelter to huge trees and forests, which in turn are habitats of wildlife. They cause rainfall, are abodes for hermits and ascetics, and offer cooler climes to those who can't bear the heat of the plains. Some of the most important pilgrim centers in India are located there. All the mighty rivers have their origin in the glaciers of the mountains.

The importance of earth is so tremendous that it need not be enumerated. The earth is called 'Mother Earth' simply because it always serves its off-springs, all the creatures who live on or beneath its surface, providing them with all their needs and being a host to them during their life—in spite of the fact that the same off-spring exploits the earth and never even thanks it.]

संत हृदय नवनीत समाना । कहा कबिन्ह परि कहै न जाना ॥ ७ ॥

निज परिताप द्रवइ नवनीता । पर दुख द्रवहिं संत सुपुनीता ॥ ८ ॥

santa hr̥daya navanīta samānā. kahā kabinḥa pari kahai na jānā. 7.

nija paritāpa drava'i navanītā. para dukha dravahim santa supunītā. 8.

Expert and learned poets have asserted that the heart of a saint is like pure and freshly produced butter (navanīta). But unfortunately these poets overlooked their

uniqueness, and did not highlight the real quality and outstanding virtue of such exalted saints. [What is it? It is narrated in the next line.] (7)

The butter melts when it is heated by fire, but the heart of exalted saints is so tender and merciful that it melts at the suffering and torments of others. [To wit, even if a saint is not personally subjected to any trouble but he observes others in trouble, his heart begins to wail as if the trouble was being suffered by the saint himself. Their heart has a lot of empathy and sympathy for others.] (8)

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## (2) Vinai Patrika

In Tulsidas' classical Book of Prayerful Hymns known as "Vinai Patrika", verse no. 57 is dedicated to the glories of saints. Now let us read what this excellent Book says on this subject:

### Importance of Saints

(57)

देव—

देहि सतसंग निजअंग श्रीरंग! भवभंग—कारण शरण—शोकहारी ।  
 ये तु भवदग्निपल्लव—समाश्रित सदा, भक्तिरत, विगतसंशय, मुरारी ॥1॥  
 असुर—सुर, नाग—नर, यक्ष—गंधर्व—खग, रजनिचर, सिद्ध, ये चापि अन्ने ।  
 संत—संसर्ग त्रैवर्गपर परमपद, प्राप्य निःप्राप्यगति त्वयि प्रसन्ने ॥2॥  
 वृत्र, बलि, बाण, प्रह्लाद, मय, व्याध, गज, गृध्र, द्विजबन्धु निजधर्मत्यागी ।  
 साधुपद—सलिल निर्धूत—कल्मष सकल, श्वपच—यवनादि कैवल्य—भागी ॥3॥  
 शांत, निरपेक्ष, निर्मम, निरामय, अगुण, शब्दब्रह्मैकपर, ब्रह्मज्ञानी ।  
 दक्ष, समदक, स्वदक, विगत अति स्वपरमति, परमरति विरति तव चक्रपानी ॥4॥  
 विश्व—उपकारहित व्यग्रचित सर्वदा, त्यक्तमदमन्यु, कृत पुण्यरासी ।  
 यत्र विष्ठन्ति तत्रैव अज शर्व हरि सहित गच्छन्ति क्षीराब्धिवासी ॥5॥  
 वेद—पयसिंधु, सुविचार मंदरमहा, अखिल—मुनिवृंद निर्मथनकर्ता ।  
 सार सतसंगमुद्घृत्य इति निश्चितं वदति श्रीकृष्ण वैदर्भिभर्ता ॥6॥  
 शोक—संदेह, भय—हर्ष, तम—तर्षगण साधु—सद्युक्ति विच्छेदकारी ।  
 यथा रघुनाथ—सायकनिशाचर—चमू—निचय—निर्दलन—पटु वेग भारी ॥7॥  
 यत्र कुत्रापि मम जन्म निजकर्मवश भ्रमत जगज्जोनि संकट अनेकं ।  
 तत्र त्वद्वक्ति—सज्जन, समागम, सदा भवतु मे राम विश्राममेकं ॥8॥  
 प्रबल भव—जनित त्रैव्याधि—भैषज भगति, भक्त भैषज्यमद्वैतदरसी ।  
 संत—भगवंत अंतर निरंतर नहीं, किमपि मति मलिन कह दासतुलसी ॥9॥

(57)

dēva-

dēhi sataśaṅga nija'aṅga śrīraṅga! bhavabhaṅga-kāraṇa śaraṇa-śōkahārī.  
yē tu bhavadaṅghripallava-samāśrita sadā, bhaktirata, vigatasansāya, murārī.

1.

asura-sura, nāga-nara, yakṣa-gandharva-khaga, rajanicara, sid'dha, yē cāpi  
annē.

santa-sansarga traivargapara paramapada, prāpya niḥprāpyagati tvayi  
prasannē. 2.

vṛtra, bali, bāṇa, prahalāda, maya, vyādha, gaja, gṛdhra, dvijabandhu  
nijadharmatyāgī.

sādhupada-salila nirdhūta-kalmaṣa sakala, śvapaca-yavanādi kaivalya-bhāgī.

3.

śānta, nirapēkṣa, nirmama, nirāmaya, aguṇa, śabdabrahmaikapara,  
brahmajñānī.

dakṣa, samaddaka, svaddaka, vigata ati svaparamati, paramarati virati tava  
cakrapānī. 4.

viśva-upakārahita vyagracita sarvadā, tyaktamadaman'yu, kṛta puṇyarāsī.

yatra viṣṭhanti tatraiva aja śarva hari sahita gacchanti kṣīrābdhivāsī. 5.

vēda-payasindhu, suvicāra mandaramahā, akhila-munivṛnda nirmathanakartā.

sāra sataśaṅgamudghṛtya iti niścitaṁ vadati śrīkrṣṇa vaidarbhibhartā. 6.

śōka-sandēha, bhaya-harṣa, tama-tarṣagaṇa sādhu-sadyukti vicchēdakārī.

yathā raghunātha-sāyakaniśācara-camū-nicaya-nirdalana-paṭu vēga bhārī. 7.

yatra kutrāpi mama janma nijakarmavaśa bhramata jagajōni saṅkaṭa anēkaṁ.

tatra tvaōkti-sajjana, samāgama, sadā bhavatu mē rāma viśrāmamēkaṁ. 8.

prabala bhava-janita traivyādhi-bhaiṣaja bhagati, bhakta

bhaiṣajyamadvaitadarasī.

santa-bhagavanta antara nirantara nahīm, kimapi mati malina kaha  
dāsatalasī. 9.

Verse no. 57—Oh Sri-Ranga (Lord Ram)<sup>1</sup>! Give me the privilege of having communion with saints<sup>2</sup> because it is one of the main paths (means) to attain (reach, realise) you, the Divine Being and the Lord of creation, because it is the destroyer of the cycle of transmigration (birth and re-birth), and because it is the remover of the sorrows of those who take refuge in this path to seek solace and succour for themselves in this world of sorrows and miseries. Oh Murari<sup>3</sup>! [“Murari” is an address for Lord Krishna.] Those who are always involved in your devotion and service, and are dependent on the grace of your holy feet which are like the petals or leaves of lotus flower (i.e. they rely solely upon you as their protector because they have taken refuge at your feet)—such persons have their ignorance-induced doubts destroyed or eliminated for good. (1).

The demons, gods, serpents, men, Yakshas (a form of demi-god in a Spirit form believed to be generally residing on the banayan tree), Gandharvas (celestial musicians), birds, Siddhas (those with mystical powers) and all other living beings (i.e. everyone) can attain that eternal and most exalted spiritual stature (of emancipation and salvation) by the simple method of having communion with saints who (i.e. whose mind and heart) remain ever engrossed in your thoughts and who are always devoted to you. This exalted stature is very high, great and rare to achieve, and it is superior to the three rewards of ‘Artha’, ‘Dharma’ and ‘Kaam’ that one gets for all his meritorious deeds in this world. [“Artha” = financial well-being; “Dharma” =

fame for diligently following the correct and auspicious path of righteousness; and “Kaam” = fulfilment of all desires.] (2).

Vrittasur<sup>4</sup>, Bali<sup>5</sup>, Vanasur<sup>6</sup>, Prahalad<sup>7</sup>, the demon Mai<sup>8</sup>, the hunter (Valmiki)<sup>9</sup>, the elephant king Gajendra<sup>10</sup>, the vulture Jatayu<sup>11</sup>, the Brahmin Ajamil<sup>12</sup> (who had fallen from his high status in society due to his misdeeds), Chandals (those who live near cremation grounds and perform last rites of dead persons; considered out-castes), Yavans (non-believers, savages, uncivilised people) etc.—all of them were able to wash their sins by the symbolic water used to wash the feet of saints (i.e. by serving saints and obeying their advice). As a reward, all of them had become eligible for attainment of the exalted status of auspiciousness and spiritual well-being as a blessing of their having taken refuge with the saints. [That is, even highly sinful persons who had no hope of ever attaining spiritual peace, or of attaining liberation and deliverance from the negative affects their sins, had actually obtained emancipation by serving the holy feet of saints and obtaining their grace and blessings.] (3).

[In the following stanza no. 4, and in the subsequent stanza no. 5, Tulsidas describes the glories of enlightened saints, and their unique characters and virtues.]

{Stanza no. 4:--}

(i) They (saints) are peaceful, placid and tranquil because all desires have left their mind (i.e. they have conquered desires).

(ii) They are neutral (i.e. are detached and dispassionate towards the world; they practice equanimity and evenness of attitude) because they do not have any need or desire for any substance or material thing of this world, and neither do they expect any favour or favourable circumstance that would give them pleasure and comfort. [Therefore, they need not pamper or favour anyone. They treat everything alike, and since they have no needs or desires for worldly things and comforts, they accept whatever comes their way. This helps them to be even in mind and remain calm under varying circumstances. They face adversities and favourable circumstances with stoicity. They treat their enemies and friends alike; they therefore have no enemies or friends. Bodily sufferings or comforts are the same for them.]

(iii) They are free from ‘Mamta’. [That is, they are without worldly attachments. They have no longing or infatuation for anything in this world.]

(iv) They have no titles or honours, and neither do they expect them. [This is because they have no ‘desires’ and prefer to practice detachment, neutrality, equanimity and renunciation.]

(v) They are without any trace of having any bias for and against anything. They are therefore neutral and beyond the effect of the three Gunas<sup>13</sup>. [That is, the three basic qualities of Satvic, Rajsic, Tamsic Gunas have no affect on them. They remain calm and neutral under all circumstances.]

(vi) They are well-versed and enlightened about the supreme Consciousness known as ‘Shabda Brahm’ represented by the cosmic word ‘OM’<sup>14</sup>. [This is known as OM KAR or Pranav Brahm as envisioned in the Vedas and other ancient scriptures. This refers to the sound generated by the cosmic Consciousness that pervades throughout the creation, and from which this visible creation is said to have emerged.]

Therefore, they are said to be ‘Brahm-Gyaani’ or ‘Brahm-realised’. That is, they are enlightened about the truth of existence in the form of the cosmic Consciousness that produces vibrations of life in this creation. Ancient scriptures have visualised this vibration of Consciousness in the form of a ‘Cosmic Sound’ that is equivalent to the sound made when one utters the word OM or AUM. There are umpteen numbers of Upanishads that deal with this topic.<sup>14]</sup>

(vii) They are fully aware of the ultimate spiritual goal that one is expected to reach when the soul has had the privilege of assuming a human body. [And this goal is to attain final liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation for one's own self, and at the same time show the correct path to others not so enlightened. A saint is supposed to act as a moral guide and a beacon of hope for the rest of the world. He is expected to teach others the correct way to live by example rather than by precept. They are skilled in carrying out the deeds/duties for which the soul gets a human body]

(viii) They are equitable in their thoughts, views and demeanours, treating everything evenly with an attitude of equanimity.

(ix) Being Brahm-realised and enlightened, they are aware of the nature of their True-self. [That is, they are 'self-realised' and understand that their true self is the pure conscious Atma, the soul, and not the physical body consisting of gross organs. They also know that this Atma is eternal as compared to the body which is mortal.]

(x) They do not distinguish between any two persons, nor as they being different from their own selves. [This is a proof of their being neutral, detached, dispassionate, equitable, self-realised and enlightened about the Truth of existence. They know that the 'Atma' or the soul is the true identity of any living being. The physical body is only a habitat of the Atma. This Atma is pure consciousness and a universal, constant entity. It is the same in all living beings. Therefore, there is no reason why one must distinguish between two creatures with different external bodies. Hence, a true saint treats everyone as he would treat himself.]

(xi) Oh Lord Chakrapaani (*cakrapānī*)! [This refers to Lord Vishnu who holds a "Chakra", a discus, in his hand. Hence, Tulsidas once again reiterates that he is addressing Lord Ram as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.] Such an exalted saint treats everything as belonging to his Lord Ram. He has distanced himself from either enjoying any of the worldly pleasures and comforts, or being affected by the sorrows and pains of the world. [This is obvious because he treats everything in this material world as belonging to Lord Ram, and therefore he has no right to enjoy them. And secondly, having inculcated all the virtues mentioned herein above, he has developed an exemplary sense of neutrality and renunciation from the world.]

(xii) Oh Lord, such a saint is a great devotee of yours; he is an ardent follower of you, and he has immense affection for you who are the Supreme Being (in a human form). (4)

{Elaborating further on the grand virtues of saints, Tulsidas continues as follows in this stanza no. 5—}

(i) The exalted saints are always concerned about the welfare of the world. [They harbour no grudges against anyone, and hope that all living beings live happily and peacefully.]

(ii) On the one hand they have abandoned (or have conquered) such negative things as 'Mada' and 'Krodha' (pride, vanity and anger), and on the other hand they have earned for themselves a great treasury in the form of 'Punya' (meritorious deeds and their spiritual rewards that are obtained by the virtue of following the auspicious path of righteousness, probity, nobility, morality, scrupulousness, goodness and proper conduct—or the path of 'Dharma').

Verily, wherever such exalted saints reside, the most exalted gods of the Trinity, such as the creator Brahma, the concluder Shiva, and the sustainer Hari (Vishnu) who lives on the surface of the celestial ocean known as the 'Ksir-Sagar', come rushing to that place. [It means that such saints have become so holy and divine

that whereas the rest of the world, including the gods, seek the blessing of the Trinity Gods and consider it very auspicious to go the abode where these three Gods live, the latter on the other hand regard saints more holy and divine than themselves. When the three Gods of the Trinity wish to seek blessings, they go to where the saints reside. This statement also means that saints are higher in the hierarchy of exalted Beings so much so that even the greatest of gods such as Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu have no hesitation in coming down from heaven to meet them. It also implies that all the gods in creation are at the beck-and-call of saints; they attend upon the saints; they pay their respects to saints. Therefore, if the great gods pay their respects to saints then obviously the latter are more honourable and reverential than the gods themselves. Hence, if one gets the blessings of saints, the gods are bound to bless such a person.] (5)

[In the following stanza nos. 6-7, Tuslidas highlights the importance of saints and their company with the help of similes. In stanza no. 6, the metaphor of the churning of the ocean is used, and in stanza no. 7 the destruction of the demon army by the arrows shot by Lord Ram is employed.]

The Vedas are like the celestial ocean (i.e. they are immense, vast, fathomless and auspicious like the abode of the Lord Vishnu himself); understanding them and their proper and correct interpretation is the Mandrachal mountain (i.e. understanding the Vedas properly and correctly is a huge and difficult task); all the community of hermits, sages, saints etc. are the ones who churn this ocean (i.e. they study and interpret the Vedas); and as a result of this exercise the Amrit (the elixir or ambrosia of eternal spiritual peace) in the form of Satsang (communion of saints where the glories of the Lord are sung) was produced. This has been declared by Sri Krishna who is the husband of Rukmani. [This story of the churning of the ocean to produce Amrit is described in the Purans. Here it has been invoked to emphasise that company of saints provides the same spiritual benefits very conveniently that one would get by studying hard and correctly understanding the huge tomes of scriptural texts which is a very cumbersome and tedious job. This is because saints distill the knowledge of the scriptures and make this knowledge easily understandable for the common man. They not only explain the principles and concepts with examples, but they show how to live a life of spirituality in practice by living it themselves.] (6).

The methods, skills, reasonings and tacts adopted or employed by the saints are so truthful, simple and straightforward that are able to eliminate all sorts of doubts and spiritual fears that haunt a seeker. Their advice and preaching helps one to overcome all fear, sorrows and ignorance. They help one to maintain poise in the ups and downs of emotions such as moments of (false) joy and moments of (imaginary) sorrows. In fact, the company of saints help one to eliminate all spiritual hurdles in the same way as the powerful arrows of Lord Ram had destroyed all the demons (in the battle-field of Lanka). (7)

Oh Sri Ram! I request you to please bless me that wherever and in whatever form I might take birth due to my deeds and their effects, I pray to you that I should be blessed with having devotion for you, and also of having contact with saints (for that would ensure my well-being). Oh Lord Sri Ram! This is my only hope, my only refuge, my only shelter and my only succour. [That is, I am a most humble person who has not done any 'Punya' or meritorious deed. Neither am I a learned man, or a Brahm-realised and enlightenend man. The only way I can ensure my good and well-being is to have company of saints, and of course having devotion for you, Lord Ram. I pray to you, oh Lord, to grant me these two things at least.] (8).

Your devotion and veneration is the only remedy that can cure and help one to tide over the horrors of the three types of tormenting diseases created by this mortal world. And the doctor who can prescribe this medicine is a devotee of yours (i.e. a saint) who sees ‘non-duality’ in this creation. [The ‘three types of horrors associated with this world’ are Adhi-daivic, Adhi-bhautic, and Adhyatmic<sup>15</sup>. Every creature suffers from them. The only way to overcome this fear and override these horrors themselves is to have company of saints where one comes to learn many spiritual truths that help him to ally his fears. Ghosts are seen in darkness, and not in light. Likewise, a person suffers from these imaginary horrors because he is unaware of the reality and truth. Once he comes to know them, all fears vanish. And what is this ‘truth’? Put simply it is that the body of the creature which suffers from all ailments is destined to perish as it is mortal from the very beginning. The body is not the ‘true self’. The Atma which is pure consciousness is this ‘true self’, and this Atma is a universal, non-dual and eternal entity. This Atma is a personified form of ‘Consciousness’ known as Brahm that lives as an individual creature. A saint knows this, and his company enlightens a person about these facts. This knowledge is like the light that helps one to get over his spiritual fears like one feels free from fear of ghosts once one opens the window and lets the sunlight come inside the room.]

In fact I, Tulsidas, though most humble and ill-witted { *mati malina* }, have always asserted this fact of ‘non-duality’ in the sense that there is no difference or distinction between saints and Lord God { *santa-bhagavanta antara nirantara nahīm* }. [Here, Tulsidas has likened saints to Lord God. Refer stanza no. 5 herein above where it is said that the Gods of the Trinity come rushing to the place where saints reside.] (9)

<sup>1</sup>Sri Ranga (śrīraṅga): This term is used to indicate Lord Vishnu who is the divine husband of goddess Laxmi, or ‘Sri’, the goddess of wealth and prosperity. Lord Ram is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, hence this term is applied to him to clearly indicate that Tulsidas refers to the Lord of the world while he offers his prayers in Vinai Patrika, and not to the ‘son of kind Dasrath of Ayodhya’.

<sup>2</sup>The glory, virtues and importance of saints and pious souls have been narrated by Tulsidas elsewhere also. Refer: (i) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 37—to Doha no. 41; (ii) Dohawali, verse nos. 375—378, 381; and (iii) Vairagya Sandipani, verse nos. 8-42.

<sup>3</sup>Murari (murārī): This shows that Tulsidas saw no distinction between the two forms of Lord Vishnu, Lord Ram, his beloved Lord who was the king of Ayodhya and who killed the demon Ravana of Lanka in the epic war, and Lord Krishna who lived in Vrindavan, killed the demonic king Kansha, and had played a pivotal role in the war of Mahabharata.

<sup>4</sup>Demon Vrittasur: Demon Vrittasur though having an evil body of a demon, was at heart a great devotee of the Lord and an enlightened soul. During the battle with Indra, his enunciations on devotion and wisdom are worth their weight in gold. (This episode appears in Bhagwat Mahapurāṇ). To kill him, the God asked sage Dadhichi to give his bones which were used to mould the Bajra (thunderbolt; the weapon of Indra), and it was used to kill him.

<sup>5</sup>Bali: The story of king Bali appears in Srimad Bhagwat, 8/15-23. It relates to the Vaaman (dwarf mendicant) incarnation of Lord Vishnu. This is the fifth incarnation of Vishnu. Bali was a grandson of Prahalad for whom Vishnu had incarnated as Nrisingh (half man and half lion) earlier.

King Bali was very righteous and powerful; he chased away Indra, the promiscuous and lustful king of Gods, from the throne of heaven, and conquered it.



He performed a thousand Ashwamedha Yagya (horse sacrifice) during the course of which he had conquered the entire world and deprived Indra, the king of Gods who ruled over the heavens, of his heavenly powers. Aditi, the mother of Gods, was peeved, and she requested her husband, sage Kashyap, to find a way out. Kashyap advised her to pray to Lord Vishnu. Aditi did severe penance for twelve days at the end of which Vishnu appeared before her and asked how he could help her. When Aditi told him the problem, Vishnu promised that he will take birth as her son in the form of a 'Vaaman' (a dwarf Brahmin) and retrieve the earth and the kingdom of heaven from Bali's dominion.

Once he heard that king Bali was performing a great fire sacrifice, something Bali used to do routinely, and during which he had declared that he will give anything asked for, again something for which he was renowned. This religious sacrifice was being conducted on the banks of river Narmada. Seizing this opportunity, Vishnu in the form of a Vaaman approached Bali who welcomed him and paid his due respects. Then Bali asked Vaaman to ask for some gift or donation as this was the traditional practice during such great religious sacrifices. Vaaman was waiting for this chance. First he made Bali repeat his vows in public, and then asked for land measuring his three steps.

Bali was dumbfounded—he wondered at the inconsequential dimension of the land covered by three tiny steps of this dwarf! Bali requested Vishnu to ask for something more, but Vishnu was adamant. Bali's priest, sage Shukracharya, knew that this dwarf was no one else but Vishnu, and so he tried to persuade Bali to abstain from making such commitment off-hand, because he will lose his entire kingdom. But Bali refused, saying that being the grandson of Prahalad, he cannot rescind on his words that he will give this Brahmin dwarf whatever he asks, even if it means sufferance.

Shukracharya was annoyed at this disobedience, but Vishnu was extremely pleased, and the Lord decided that after fulfilling the promise made to the Gods he will instantly reward Bali in ample terms, and will himself serve him! What a wonderful grace Vishnu shows.

So it happened that Vishnu, in the form of Vaaman, assumed a colossal form of cosmic proportions. The Lord measured the entire earth that Bali ruled in his first step. In the second step Vishnu measured the whole heaven. Nothing was left for the third step—so Bali offered his head! Vishnu was extremely pleased, and being the Lord of the world, he decided that since Bali has offered his own self to him like a faithful devotee, he will fully reward him. Hence, Vishnu blessed Bali that he will go down in history as the greatest donor and righteous of all times, that he will become Indra, the king of Gods, and rule over the heavens during the celestial era known as Saawarni Manvantar, that till that time he shall become the king of the nether world where demons would live, and to add icing to the cake the Lord declared that he himself will become his gatekeeper, and anybody who dared oppose him would be punished by the Lord himself!

<sup>6</sup>Demon Vanasur: Vanasur was the son of king Bali (for whom Lord Vishnu manifested as the dwarf mendicant Vaaman). He had 1000 arms and was an ardent devotee of Shiva. His daughter named Usha had a dream in which she saw Sri Krishna's grandson Anirudha, who was very handsome. Enamoured by him, Usha took the help of her favourite maid and companion Chitrlekha to smuggle Anirudha into her private palace. When her father Vanasur came to know of this adultery and trickery, he threw the boy in the prison. This led to a ferocious battle between Krishna and Vanasur, in which Lord Shiva fought on the side of his devotee Vanasur. When

all but four of his hands were cut by Krishna, the demon relented, and asked for forgiveness. At the intercession of Shiva on his behalf, Krishna made him fearless. Thereafter, Usha was married to Anirudh. This episode also appears in Bhagwat Puran.

<sup>7</sup>Prahalad: He was an ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu. He was the eldest son of the king of demons, named Hiranyakashipu. His mother was Kayaadhu, the daughter of the demon king named Jambhaasur. Both the mother and the son were initiated by sage Narad who had inspired them to become devotees of Lord Vishnu.

The story of Prahalad is narrated in detail in (i) Vishnu Puran, 1/17-20, and (ii) Bhagvata Puran, 7/3-10.

The father, being a demon, was an inveterate opponent of Lord Vishnu, and so naturally he couldn't tolerate his own son worshipping his enemy Lord Vishnu. He tried his best to dissuade Prahalad from being devoted to the Lord, but the son had immense faith in the Lord and would not be deterred by his father's threats and scolding. Hiranyakashipu tried even cruel means to change Prahalad, including an attempt to burn in a raging fire, but the child devotee escaped unscathed. So, finally the demon father decided to kill him personally. Prahalad was tied to a pillar and asked 'Where is your Lord Vishnu? Is he in this pillar also?' The child replied in the affirmative. Then his father swung the sword to kill him, and it was at this instant that Lord Vishnu revealed himself as the famous incarnation known as 'Nrisingh'—the upper half of his body was like a lion and the lower half was like a man. An Upanishad titled 'Nrisingh Tapini Upanishad' of the Atharva Veda is dedicated to this Lord.

Lord Nrisingh snatched the sword and laid the demon father across his laps. He then tore through his abdomen, and yanked out his intestines, thereby killing the demon. He then picked up the child Prahalad on to his laps and lovingly licked and caressed him like a lion does to its cub. But Prahalad prayed to the Lord to provide deliverance to the soul of his father, at which the Lord liberated the demon from all his sins.

Prahalad is credited with enumerating the nine-fold path of Bhakti, the path of devotion for the Lord, in the epic Bhaagvata, 7/5/23.

Lord Dattatreya, one of the manifestations of Lord Vishnu, had preached Prahalad about the eclectic state of Avadhut Sanyasi in the form of a huge python, known as Ajgara. Prahalad had spiritual discussions also with other sages such as Hansa (the divine Swan, an incarnation of Vishnu), and with Indra (the king of Gods). Prahalad had four brothers, three sons and a daughter. The king of demons known as Bali, who was famous for his charities and donations, was a grandson of Prahalad. The incarnations of Vishnu as Vaaman, the dwarf mendicant, is related to this legendary king.

<sup>8</sup>Demon Mai: Demon Mai was not a warrior or cruel demon. He was a great architect and town planner. He was the chief architect, planner and developer of Lanka of Ravana and Indraprastha of Kauravs. He was devotee of the Lord God. The fact that Mai had constructed Lanka for the demon king Ravana has been expressly mentioned by Tulsidas in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupi line nos. 5-8 that precede Doha no. 178.

<sup>9</sup>Valmiki: Sage Valmiki is well known for his classical work known as the famous epic 'Ramayana', which is his magnum opus. He is also credited with penning Advhut Ramayan in which Sita had assumed the form of Maha Kali to kill the Ravana with a thousand heads.

Valmiki is said to be the son of sage Pracheta who is said to be the son of Varun, the Water God. He is also said to be one of the Prajaapatis—the ancient patriarchs of this world.

According to Adhyatma Ramayan, Ayodhya Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 57-58 he was a Brahmin by birth but became a robber and adopted their means of livelihood because he was brought up by robbers. Once the seven celestial sages known as the Sapta-Rishis went through the forest where he lived, and Valmiki accosted them. When asked by the sages why he robbed others, Valmiki replied that he did it to feed his family and other dependants. The sages advised him that they would not share the consequences of sins that he is committing for them. To test the correctness of this advice, Valmiki tied them to a tree and went to his house to ask his kith and kin if they would share any misfortune that might befall upon him. When they replied that they are only concerned with what loot he brings home, Valmiki's eyes of wisdom opened instantaneously. He rushed back to the sages, untied them and fell at their feet seeking forgiveness. He asked them to show him the path by which he can seek redemption and salvation for himself. The sages then advised him to do Japa (repetition) with Lord Ram's holy Name 'RAM'. Valmiki said that he was so sinful that it is not possible for him to utter the Lord's holy Name. At this, the sages thought over the matter and told him to repeat the name in the reverse order—as 'MARA'. When this word MARA is repeated it becomes RAM. This trick worked fine for Valmiki, and he immediately sat down to do Tapa (severe form of penance) and meditated on the name of the Lord in the reverse order. He became so immobile and lost in contemplation that a mound of anthill formed around his body. It so happened that when the sages returned to the same place during their return journey, they saw him in this condition. They poured consecrated water on him and revived him. It was then that they gave him a new name 'Valmiki', which means 'one who has emerged from an anthill'. This story is narrated in Adhyatma Ramayan, Ayodhya Kand, 6/57-58.

He established a hermitage on the banks of river Tamsa and lived there. Lord Ram went to meet him during his outward journey to the forest, and it was in the sage's hermitage that Sita lived and her two sons Lav and Kush were born when she was sent to exile by Ram during the final days of the Lord's days on earth as a prelude to his winding up his worldly 'Leela' or deeds and ascending to the heaven as Lord Vishnu.

One day Valmiki saw a hunter shoot down a male bird and heard the wailings of his companion, the female bird. He cursed the hunter in a verse that came out of his mouth in a poetic style called the Anushtup Chand (metre). Never before had Valmiki ever composed any verse, so he was astonished at this development. Then Brahma the creator appeared before him and ordered him to compose the epic Ramayan for which the basic story was provided to him by sage Narad.

The genesis of the story of Ramayan is this—Once the celestial sage Narad came to his hermitage (called an Ashram) on the behest of Brahma. Valmiki asked him if there was anyone living in this creation who embodied all the 16 Kalaas (qualities) that the Supreme Being is known to possess. Then Narad told him about Lord Ram. This is how the grand and magnificent story of the Ramayan was revealed.

<sup>10</sup>Gajendra: In the ancient country of Dravid (the present day South India), there was a kingdom called Pandyaraaj whose king was named Indradumna. He was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu and used to offer regular worship to the Lord with great diligence. Once, sage Agastya passed that way with his retinue of disciples. The king was so engrossed in the worship of the Lord that he did not notice the sage and neither

did he get up to welcome him or pay his obeisance to him. This annoyed the sage and he cursed—‘You are like a haughty and wild elephant who pays no heed to those standing in the front. Therefore, you deserve to become an elephant—so you would take a birth as an elephant.’ When the king died he became an elephant in a pleasant island in the middle of the Kshirsagar, the celestial ocean of milk.

He had a majestic body and was very strong in his herd. Once he was playing with his she-elephants and companions in a large and beautiful pond. In this pond lived an alligator/crocodile who was actually a Gandharva (a semi-god) named Huhu in his previous life and had become an alligator due to a curse of sage Deval. The alligator /crocodile caught hold of the leg of the elephant and started pulling him inside the deep lake. The Gaja himself and all his companions tried their best but failed to free him from the mouth of the alligator. A long tussle followed and the elephant became completely exhausted. When the situation became so bad that the Gaja, the elephant, was about to sink fully inside the water, he broke a lotus flower and offered it to Lord Vishnu as his last worship and offering before dying. The merciful Lord rushed instantly astride his mount, called the Garud, to save him. Reaching the spot within a moment, the Lord pulled the Gaja out of the water with one hand, and with the other he opened the mouth of the alligator to yank the leg of the elephant free from its clutches. Then the Lord cut off the alligator’s head with his circular weapon known as the Chakra.

Both the alligator/crocodile and the elephant found liberation—the alligator/crocodile reverted to his earlier form of a Gandharva, and Gaja the elephant assumed a divine form similar to that of the Lord and went to his abode in the heaven.

<sup>11</sup>Jataau/Jatau: Jatau was a vulture by birth but a great devotee of Lord Ram. When Ravana was rushing towards Lanka on his chariot with Sita as captive, it was Jatau who had fought fiercely with him in an attempt to rescue Sita from the demon’s clutches. But ultimately Ravana had cut off his wings, and so the unfortunate Jatau fell down on the ground, mortally wounded. He kept repeating the holy Name of Lord Ram and managed to hold on to his life till the time the Lord came there in his search of Sita. Jatau told the Lord about Ravana stealing Sita and proceeding towards Lanka in the south direction. Then Jatau left his mortal coil while Lord Ram held him in his arms, caressing him and wiping his wounds with his own hands and using the plaits of his long hairs. When Jatau died, the Lord did his last rites himself—a privilege that no one else except one other character, i.e. Sabari, had got in the whole story of the Ramayana. Even Dasrath, who was the worldly father of the Lord, was denied this honour when he died at Ayodhya after the Lord was sent to exile in the forest because at that time only Bharat and Shatrughan were present in the city, and so his last rites were performed by Bharat. This episode is narrated in all the versions of the Ramayana, e.g. in the Ram Charit Manas of Tulsidas, in its Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 29 right upto Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 33.

It ought to be noted here that prior to this, Lord Ram has met Jatau earlier in the forest and befriended him. Jatau was a friend of Dasrath, and he had assured the Lord that he will stay in close proximity with them (Ram, Sita and Laxman) in the forest to keep a vigilant eye and give them protection to the best of his might—this is narrated in the Adhyatma Ramayan of sage Veda Vyas, Aranya Kand, Canto 4, verse nos. 1-7. This fact is also endorsed by Tulsidas in Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 12, stanza no. 2.

The glorious way that Jatau died has been lauded and applauded by Tulsidas in Dohawali verse nos. 222-227. Refer also to Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse nos. 12-16.

“Lord Ram lifted Jatau onto his lap and washed his wounds with the tears streaming from his (Ram’s) eyes”—this is said in Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 13, stanza no. 1, while Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 30 says that “the Lord moved his loving hand carrassingly on his head”.

Jatau’s special death which made him a subject of jealousy and envy for all other exalted persons as narrated in the Doha above has one unique aspect—in spite of him being a vulture by birth and body, he was given an honour befitting a father by none else than the Supreme Being (Lord Ram) himself when the Lord performed his last rites himself—refer: (i) Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 16, stanza no. 4; verse no. 14, stanza no. 1; (ii) Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 32; (iii) Kavitali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 16, line no. 3; (iv) Doha no. 227 of Dohawali; (v) Vinai Patrika, verse no. 164, stanza no. 2; verse no. 138, stanza no. 3, line no. 1.

Vinai Patrika, verse no. 138, stanza no. 3, line no. 1 says that Lord Ram offered a ‘Pinda’, a ball of cereals that is offered to the soul of one’s departed parent, to Jatau after the bird left its physical body.

Doha no. 227 of Dohawali clearly says “Lord Sri Ram, who is an ocean of graciousness and mercy, performed the last rites of Jatau with a devotion and fervour which was ten times more than what he had for his own father Dasrath, and having done so, he, along with his brother Laxman, gravely mourned his (Jatau’s) death.”

The remarkable thing is that Lord Ram has called Jatau ‘his father’ in clear terms in Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 15, stanza no. 1 when the Lord requests Jatau to live a little longer for some more days so that he (Ram) can enjoy his company as a father and becomes privileged to receive his blessings as a son gets from his father.

Dohawali’s Doha no. 233 says—“Upon hearing the news of how Jatau, the king of vultures, had died, the great ascetics, the Karmayogis (those who do their duties in a righteous manner), the devotees, the wise-men, the sages, the mystics, the hermits, the higher and lower borns, et al—in short, all living beings became jealous of him on the one hand, and praised him and applauded him for the auspicious death he got.”

When people came to know how Jatau had died while being caressed by Lord Ram as he lay cradled in the Lord’s arms, and how the Lord had himself performed his last rites, they all praised Jatau and wished that they too could die the same way. They all became convinced that of all the living beings on earth, no one was as fortunate and lucky as Jatau—because all those who have taken a birth must die, but it’s rarer than the rarest occasion when the Supreme Being himself comes down walking upto a dying man to move his divine hands on his head, to cradle the dying man in his arms, and to do his last rites with his own hands. Their becoming ‘jealous’ is a figure of speech to emphasise how much they envied Jatau because envy is a sort of praise and honour. One becomes envious of another person only when the latter has something that is highly praiseworthy and valuable, and which the other person who is jealous does not have nor expects to have any time in the future.

Jealousy and envy is an indirect way of immense praise. One is not jealous of an evil character in a person, because such character is denounced by the society. One is jealous and envious of a person only if he possesses some noble virtue or skill or asset for which the world lauds him and applauds him.

Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 13, stanza no. 4 explicitly says that when Lord Ram asked Jatau that if he wished to live then the Lord can grant him a longer life, Jatau had replied—“Lord, well, tell me one thing—to be in the presence of the

Supreme Lord at the time of death is most difficult even for great ascetics and sages to achieve, and this magnificent opportunity has come to me out of its own free will. Where will I get it again? I will not be cheated of this golden chance by bargaining it for a life that is nonetheless transient, mortal, false, deluding and decayable. Therefore, I do not wish to live any longer!”

Then again, in Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 15, stanza no. 4, Jatau says—“Oh Lord, believe me. My death is so honourable and desirable that not even the four commendable noble fruits that the scriptures say one gets by living a life of full auspiciousness and righteousness (i.e. the rewards of Artha—worldly prosperity and well-being, Dharma—honour that comes with being rightful and righteous), Kaam—fulfilment of all desires, and Moksha—spiritual liberation and deliverance) can ever compare with it. Tell me, is there any such other honourable and divine reward more desirable than the way I am dying?” Lord Ram was left speechless, for he had no answer to this question!

What other factor, besides the fact that Jatau died in the arms of the Supreme Being, made his death so desirable and laudable? He had died in a selfless manner serving the Lord in trying to protect Sita, Lord Ram’s honourable wife, from the clutches of the demon Ravana who had abducted her and was taking her away to his city of Lanka. ‘Selfless service’ is one of the greatest deeds for a person to do, and this single action of Jatau made him perfectly eligible for immediate deliverance upon death. In other words, if one dies doing selfless service, and offers his services to the Lord God while actually undertaking the exercise, then his emancipation and salvation is a surety. Such a creature is praised by all the saints and sages—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 84.

In Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 27, Angad praised Jatau when he said—“There is no one more praiseworthy and honourable than Jatau in this world. He is most adorable because he had left his mortal body in the selfless service of Lord Ram, and had gone to the divine abode of Lord Hari (Vishnu) after death.”

Nothing is in-accessible or un-attainable for a creature who has the good of others in his heart, who thinks for the welfare of others, and who is not selfish—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 31.

Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 16, stanza no. 3 says that “the king of vultures assumed a divine form and went to heaven after bowing at the holy feet of Lord Ram and enshrining the Lord’s beautiful and holy image in his heart even as he heard his own glories and those of the Lord’s being sung all around in the world”.

Doha no. 224 of Dohawali says “So many have died till now; so many are dying at present; and so many will die in the future with the passage of time—but till today, and not ever in the future, will anyone get the privilege of dying the way Jatau had died. (224)”

<sup>12</sup>Ajamil or Dwij Bandhu: Dwij Bandhu is another name of Ajamil because he was a Brahmin by birth. But unfortunately he became enamoured with a prostitute and married her. Bad company made him turn into a hunter. One day a group of sages passed by the village. When they asked the villagers if there was a Brahmin’s house where they could spend the night, the villagers told them of Ajaamil. So these sages decided to spend the night there. When Ajaamil returned from his hunting trip with a catch of a bird and saw the sages, he felt very ashamed. He confided with them that he is a fallen man and that they should not eat in his house. The saints had a merciful heart and they thought amongst themselves that it is their moral obligation to show this man some way by which he can find liberation and deliverance.

They cooked their own meals with whatever they had. The next day, they summoned Ajaamil and told him, 'Look, your wife is pregnant. She will soon deliver a son. Give that son the name 'Narayan' (one of the many names of Lord Vishnu). This would lead to your emancipation.' And then the group of sages went on their journey.

When the son was born, Ajaamil named him as advised by them—he called the son 'Narayan'. He was very fond of the son, and called out his name 'Narayan, Narayan' umpteen numbers of times during the course of the day. He was unwittingly taking the name of Lord Vishnu. This continued till the time came for his death.

When he was tormented by the messengers of Yam, the God of hell and death, he became terrified and called out in fear—'Narayan, Narayan. Save me'. Though he was calling his son, but the Lord heard his name being called out by someone in distress. So he sent his own messengers to protect the caller. The messengers of Lord chased away the messengers of Yam and took Ajaamil to heaven. When Yam complained to Vishnu, the Lord told him that if anyone calls out his name at the time of death he is duty-bound to liberate and protect him. This story tells us the power of the name of the Lord.

This story is narrated in Srimad Bhagwat, 6/1-2.

<sup>13</sup>The three Gunas: The character of all the living beings in the entire creation is dependent upon three celebrated primary qualities called the Gunas. They are Sata, Raja and Tama.

(a) The Sata Guna is the best of the three qualities present in any creature. It is a positive quality and is marked by a propensity for following the path of nobility, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, virtuousness, holiness and righteousness. Creatures that have a predominance of Sata Guna are inclined to do selfless service, be benevolent, merciful, kind and gracious, have coolness of head and a rationale and balanced mind, be contented, have humility and piety etc. Such creatures are devoted to good values in life and have a desire to acquire knowledge that would help them reach higher spiritual goals in life.

This Sata Guna is marked by high standards of ethical and moral existence that makes the bearer of such qualities highly respected in society. Such people have a spiritual dimension to their personality. This quality is spiritually uplifting and gives a divine halo to those who possess it and practice it.

The Vasanas that have the Sata Guna or quality dominant in them are like a veil covering the lamp or like a smoke covering the fire. A slight breeze will remove this smoke. Similarly a little bit of prayer and meditation will remove the Satwic desires; its removal requires the least effort.

(b) The second quality is the Raja Guna and it makes a man more attracted to this material world and its charms, and less spiritually inclined. The Raja Guna is the medium quality marked by a greater percentage of worldly passions, desires and attachments and their natural offshoots in a creature. It makes a creature inclined towards the material things of the gross world and their enjoyments, towards creation of wealth, its enhancement and protection, and generally having a desire for growth, development and expansion etc. It covers such qualities as worldly yearnings, passions, a stormy nature, agitated behaviour, ambitions, selfishness, expansionist tendencies, a desire to acquire, retain and develop such acquisitions even to the detriment of one's long term spiritual welfare and even if such actions cause pain to others. All these pertain to this materialistic world. Such qualities give worldly fame and prosperity. If these qualities are judiciously mixed with the Satwic qualities, then

they provide the person the better of the two worlds, both in terms of worldly fame as well as spiritual well being.

The Vasanas that have the Rajsic Guna or quality dominant in them can be compared to dust on a mirror. In this case some dusting and rubbing is needed to clean the mirror; a greater effort is needed as compared to the case with Satwic quality.

(c) The third quality is called the Tama Guna and is the meanest and the basest of the three Gunas. It is a demeaning quality in a creature that leads to his downfall and perpetual entanglement with things that are considered improper and unethical. It creates an inclination for committing all sorts of sins, misdeeds and demeanours. It leads the creature towards negativity and inspires him to acquire negative qualities such as various vices, evils, sins, perversions etc. It makes him inclined to be greedy, rapacious, haughty, arrogant, lustful, intoxicated, vile and wild to the extreme. Such a creature with a predominance of Tama Guna has utter disregard for propriety, noble virtues and ethics, for righteousness and morality.

In brief, it is the most degrading, denigrating and contemptible of the three characteristics in a person, and leads to such behaviour which is utterly immoral, denigrating and depraved, marked by grossness, crassness and recklessness. It therefore leads to his downfall, ignominy and ruin as well as ignorance, delusions, gloom, inertia, anger, frustration etc.

The Tamsic Guna or quality is like the embryonic membrane that covers the foetus in the womb. They cannot be removed easily and require great diligence, effort, persistence, dedication and careful handling requiring time and patience. It is the basest and the lowliest of the three characteristics, and the worst type to possess.

The Vasanas that have the Tama Guna in dominance are regarded as the ‘bad Vasanas’ or better still the ‘worst type of Vasana’ that any individual can have.

These Gunas, in varying ratios and mixtures, decide the character and personality of any given unit of creation. In modern world we recognize them as the ‘gene’ special to that individual, the ‘gene’ which makes each individual so unique in this creation. These Gunas can also be compared to the various shades and hues of colours that a painter uses to paint a picture or a portrait and inject life and uniqueness to it. Even the same painter cannot duplicate exactly a picture again—there is bound to be a difference between any two pictures or portraits no matter how invisible, imperceptible, microscopic and subtle it might be.

The effect of the Gunas and how they affect this creation have been explained in a number of Upanishads. some of the references are these: Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 2 of the Atharva Veda; Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 6, paragraph no. 7; Shaarirak Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 13; Pashupat Brahm Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Kanda 1, verse no. 9; Naradparivrajak Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Canto 3, verse no. 77; Brihajjabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Brahman 3, verse no. 1; Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 116.

<sup>14</sup>OM and Brahm: There are umpteen numbers of Upanishads that deal with this esoteric subject which is beyond the purview of the present book to be described in detail here. Refer to the following Upanishads—

The eclectic concept of the ethereal sound known as Naad and its conceptualisation as the word Mantra OM has been explained in a number of Upanishads. Some of these Upanishads are the following—

(a) Rig Veda—Naad Bindu Upanishad.



(b) Krishna Yajur Veda—Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli (Canto) 1, Anuvak (sub-canto) 8; Amrit Naad Upanishad, verse no. 2, 4, 24-25, 31-32; Dhyani Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 2, 9-18 (which narrates how each letter of OM stands for different aspects of creation), 37, 102; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 1, 6; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 136-139; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 2-12, 69-71 ½ (which narrates how each letter of OM stands for different aspects of creation); Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 1.11—1.34, and Canto 5, verse nos. 69-72; Shuk-Rahasya Upanishad, verse no. 20 (describes how OM is used for the purpose of ritualistic worship according to the Tantra philosophy involving Anga Nyas, Shadanga Nyas etc.); Akchu Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 42-43 ½ (describe how the three states of existence, i.e. waking, dreaming and deep sleep, and the three types of bodies, i.e. gross, subtle and causal, came into existence as manifestations of the three letters A, U and M of the word OM); Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse no. 38.

(b) Shukla Yajur Veda—Taarsar Upanishad, Canto 2, and Canto 3, verse nos. 1-7; Hans Upanishad, verse nos. 6-17.

(c) Sam Veda—Yogchudamani Upanishad verse no. 74-81, 85-88; Pranava Panishad which has only 13 verses dedicated to OM.

(d) Atharva Veda—Sita Upanishad, verse no. 9; Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 7; Ram Tapiniopanishad, canto 3, verse no.5-9; Prashna Upanishad, full Canto 5; Mundak Upanishad, Canto 2, section 2, verse no. 4,6; Mandukya Upanishad, verse no. 1, 8-12; Atharvashikha Upanishad; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 8; Canto 2, verse nos. 2, 5; Canto 4, verse no. 3; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 8, verse nos. 1-7; Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 6, verse nos. 1-5; Param Hans Parivrajak Upanishad, verse no. 6; Pashupat Brahm Upanishad, Kanda/Canto 1, verse no. 4, 17 (which equates OM with the 'Hans' Mantra), 20 (which says that OM is used a Mantra to offer worship or reverence to the Atma); Kanda/Canto 2, verse no. 3-5; Par Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 2, 5.

The supreme transcendental Being known as 'Brahm' is also known as Pranav Brahm or Shaba Brahm because the term 'Brahm' refers to the cosmic Consciousness that is at the core of this creation, and this 'Consciousness' generates 'vibrations of life' in the deep bowls of the cosmos, and these vibrations in turn produce a 'sound'. 'Sound' is a characteristic of 'conscious life' as only a living entity can 'speak and utter something', or produce a sound. In the cosmic context, this sound that was heard is best represented by the sound made by the monosyllabic word OM.

The cosmos is like a colossus bowl, and the sound generated by the Consciousness produced a deep and dense reverberating sound that was called 'Naad'. The word 'Naad' itself means a reverberating sound that is deep and dense and pulsating like the one made by a huge and heavy bell or drum.

The cosmic 'Consciousness' vibrated with life, and this created pulses that spread in waves in the cosmic ether much like ripples that spread on the surface of a pond when one throws a stone in it. Since there was nothing to obstruct these vibrations, they spread uniformly throughout this creation, permeating every inch of it.

Now, ancient sages and seers tried to explain this esoteric concept by coining the words 'Brahm' and 'OM' to represent respectively the 'cosmic Consciousness' and the 'signs of life it produces in the form of vibrations in the cosmic ether that in turn created sound in the cosmos'. Again, since Consciousness and Sound go hand-in-hand, these sages and seers called Brahm as 'Pranav Brahm' or 'Shabda Brahm'. The word 'Shabda' means a letter or word. Here, the word 'Shabda' refers to the monosyllabic word OM that was deemed to be the nearest analogue to the cosmic

sound that was produced by the supreme Consciousness in the cosmic ether. This is because when one says the word OM or AUM slowly, the sound that is produced is equivalent to the sound that is heard in the deep corners of the universe even now.

OM was therefore treated as the nearest analogue and a synonym of Brahm, the supreme Consciousness. Later on the Purans made this abstract idea very easy to comprehend by giving it the name of the Supreme Being: the Brahm, the Parmatma, the Supreme Lord of creation, the Viraat Purush (which literally means the immense dimension of the all-encompassing and all-inclusive form of Brahm).

To access the secret of Brahm, this word OM was given the status of a formula, known as a 'Mantra'. OM therefore became a 'name of Brahm', a synonym of Brahm. OM helped an aspirant seeking to know the truth of Brahm and of existence an easy method to access the latter. In other words, OM was not only a word and a name assigned to Brahm but was also a path that can lead a seeker of truth to the cosmic Consciousness. OM is a Mantra that provides direct access to Brahm and to the cosmic Consciousness that is at the core of creation.

By corollary, the word OM began to represent the cosmic 'Naad' as well. And by extension it began to represent Brahm and Consciousness too.

<sup>14</sup>The three great torments in the world are known as 'Traitaap': Refer: (i) Rig Veda's Mudgal Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 2; (ii) Atharva Veda's Sharva Upanishad, verse no. 17.

(a) 'Adhyatmic' problems are those that the creature faces in his spiritual pursuits, (b) 'Adhibhautic' problems are created by terrestrial creatures like enemies, wild animals, cruel kings, thieves, bodily afflictions such as old age and diseases etc., (c) 'Adhidaivic' are the problems created by unfavourable Gods and malignant stars.]

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### (3) Dohawali

Tulsidas' another wonderful Book is called "Dohawali". It consists of two-line verses, each complete in itself and each a nugget of pristine wisdom. In this Book, verse nos. 375—378; 381 deal with the glory of saints as follows:

375. प्रभु सनमुख भएँ नीच नर होत निपट बिकराल ।  
रबिरुख लखि दरपन फटिक उगिलत ज्वालाजाल ॥

375. prabhu sanamukha bha'ēm' nīca nara hōta nipaṭa bikarāla.  
rabirukha lakhi darapana phaṭika ugilata jvālājāla..

A wicked person of a low mentality becomes exceedingly haughty and arrogant when he finds that his master or patron is favourable towards him.

[When a man who is intrinsically pervert and wicked finds that his senior is favourably inclined towards him due to some reason, then instead of feeling humble

and obliged he becomes arrogant and haughty, throwing his weight around on his other colleagues, showing off his privileged status, and thinking that no one can harm him anymore and he can bully others at will, because the chief likes him more than others, and any complaint against him would not be entertained by him. A person of an inherent good nature, on the other hand, would become more cooperative with his colleagues, and would always go out of his way to help them.

Similarly, a wicked minister of a king may become arrogant, cruel and exploitative if he finds that the king favours him over other courtiers, and instead of looking for the welfare of the subjects of the kingdom with greater zeal and using his privileged position in the hierarchy of the kingdom, he will begin tormenting the people.]

For instance, when a mirror or a lens-glass (or a quartz) find that the sun is facing them (a metaphor for the sun taking interest in them and paying its attention to them over all the other things on earth), they become extremely hot (a metaphor for being arrogant, haughty, pervert, hypocrite and stubborn), and begin to imitate the sun by radiating heat as much as the sun itself by reflecting its heat.

[When the mirror faces the sun, it reflects the sun so intensely that looking at the image of the sun in the mirror would be same as looking at it directly in the sky with naked eyes. If the mirror is left facing the sun for some time, it becomes very hot.

Similarly, a convex lens focuses the sun's rays so intensely that if dry leaves are put at its focal point then the heat generated would burn them. The same leaves do not get burnt when lying in the open under the sun, but the lens burns them as if it itself was the sun. No other ordinary piece of glass would be able to do this; only the lens is able to imitate the sun and spew heat and energy sufficiently strong to burn dry leaves or paper.

These two examples are used by way of metaphors by Tulsidas to emphasise the point how lowly people do not realise that they have no powers or abilities themselves but it comes from the senior authority over them, and therefore they have no reason to become proud of something they are able to do or successes they achieve. Their successes and achievements are not due to their own abilities or skills, but due to the blessing or patronage of their senior. So they should be obliged towards him and serve him with greater sincerity instead of waiting for an opportunity to stab their patron and mentor in the back.] (375)

#### Nature of a noble person

376. प्रभु समीप गत सुजन जन होत सुखद सुबिचार ।  
लवन जलधि जीवन जलद बरषत सुधा सुबारि ।।

376. prabhu samīpa gata sujana jana hōta sukhada subicāra.  
lavana jaladhi jīvana jalada baraṣata sudhā subāri..

[Now, the nature of a noble person is outlined so that the comparison between him and a wicked person becomes evident.]

A noble and good-hearted man becomes a provider of welfare and happiness to all others when he stays close to the master and is favourably looked upon by him.

Tulsidas says that he makes this assertion after thinking properly, and we must also understand this difference (between a wicked man and a noble-hearted man).

[When a wise and noble-hearted man finds that he has the privilege of being in the good books of his lord, master, chief or senior, the 'Authority', he will never become haughty and arrogant like his wicked counterpart. Instead, he will use his privileged position to help his colleagues and other persons who may not have the privilege of direct contact with the chief or the senior Authority like him but nevertheless need his help so that their pleas are heard by that Authority. Such men are respected in society.]

[Tulsidas gives the following example—] For instance, the source of the cloud is the salty ocean, but while the ocean is of no use to the world, the cloud sustains life on earth by pouring its nectar-like water in the form of rain over the entire stretch of the land for the benefit of all.

[The ocean is a rich and endless source of water, but what good is it to us? Its water cannot be drunk, and though it covers almost two-thirds of the earth the rest of the land would remain parched and dried had it not been for the rain falling from the cloud. The greenery of the earth is due to the rain and its source, the cloud, and not due to the ocean.

The cloud is formed by water evaporating from the ocean; the ocean seeds the cloud. But the irony is that while the ocean is worthless, the cloud is worth its weight in gold. In this instance, the 'ocean' is like the main Authority from where all powers and resources come, and the 'cloud' is like the benevolent and magnanimous person who acts as a benefactor for the world at large, and that too in a selfless manner.

The cloud owes its existence and its ability to give water to the earth from the ocean; but it never shows off. The cloud gives liberally, not keeping any water miserly for its own use, knowing fully well that it can draw more of it from its main patron, the ocean. The cloud generously gives its resource to others for their welfare. People look up to the cloud for their supply of fresh water, and they never go to the ocean, though technically the ocean can be used to meet all the fresh water needs of the human race after filtering and desalinating its vast resources of water.

But the roar of the ocean is fierce, and it can scare the wits out of the faint-hearted when it begins to rise with huge wall-like waves. On the other hand, no one fears the rain; it is most welcome after a scorching summer. The water of the ocean can never irrigate the fields of the farmer, but the rain from the cloud actually waters his fields; the crops directly depend upon a good monsoon rain.

Similarly, a kind and generous man uses all his additional abilities that he gets by being in the proximity of some senior Authority for the welfare of others, and does not exploit this privilege or proximity to fill his own coffers. For, if he does so then there would be no difference between him and a wicked man.] (376)

#### Comparison of a selfless and a selfish man

377. नीच निरावहिं निरस तरु तुलसी सींचहि ऊख ।  
पोषत पयद समान सब बिष पियूष के रुख ॥

377. nīca nirāvahim nirasa taru tulasī sīncāhi ūkha.  
pōṣata payada samāna saba biṣa piyūṣa kē rukha..

Comparing a selfish man with a selfless man, Tulsidas says that an evil man (i.e. one who is selfish and self-centered) has no qualms in uprooting dried-up (dead) trees from the fields and throwing them away (because they are useless for him), while he waters and tends to the sugarcane plant (because he benefits from it).

[In other words, a selfish man will have no second thoughts in breaking relationships with and even betraying the other person even though he had been a long-term companion if the latter does not serve the former's vested interest. As long as the companion is in good times and the selfish man derives some benefits from him, he will be the former's friend, but if the companion faces rough time and is no longer of help to the selfish man then the latter would have prick of the conscience in turning his face away. The selfish man will not even think of helping his companion during his rough patch though the latter had been helping the former throughout his life.]

Citing the instance of the cloud, Tulsidas says that the cloud showers its rain uniformly on the whole earth, and both the poisonous as well as the sweet (i.e. beneficial) trees are benefited by its rain; the cloud nourishes them without distinction, and is equally benevolent upon them.

[The noble-hearted man will not shy away from helping the downtrodden and the less privileged. He will as easily and comfortably befriend a poor man and talk cheerfully with him as he will with the mighty and the powerful. He blends equally with all members of the society. On the other hand, evil persons with a haughty nature will show off their stature by hobnobbing and rubbing shoulders with the mighty and the powerful while sniffing snobbishly and contemptibly at the poor and the downtrodden, treating them with disdain as if they were scums of the society.] (377)

#### Nature of a noble person

378. बरषि बिस्व हरषित करत हरत ताप अघ प्यास ।

तुलसी दोष न जलद को जो जल जरै जवास ॥

378. baraṣi bisva haraṣita karata harata tāpa agha pyāsa.

tulasī dōṣa na jalada kō jō jala jarai javāsa..

The cloud pleases the whole world by pouring its rain upon it in a uniform manner, without prejudice and distinction. It strives to eliminate the heat and troubles caused by it; it quenches the thirst of the world.

In spite of this benevolence of the cloud some people accuse it of being cruel to the 'Jawas' (a prickly plant used in herbal medicines; the plant *Alhagi comelorum*) because this plant gets burnt (scalded) on being sprinkled by cold drops of the rain. Tulsidas wonders what fault is there of the cloud if one plant suffers because of it while the rest of the world is immensely benefitted by its rain.

[Tulsidas means that it is impossible to please each single entity in this world. Even the Gods are not spared by humans who accuse them of not being sufficiently merciful if the things do not turn out the way a man wants. The man will not realise that there was some fault in his own efforts; or that the Gods have to be neutral, and if his actions or deeds harm others or exploit them then the Gods cannot oblige him.]

Will the God like to punish his neighbour just because he wants them to suffer for no fault of theirs, except that he is jealous of them?

A wise man is one who keeps the broader good of the world in sight in all his decisions and actions. If this means that a few insignificant numbers have to suffer while the rest of the people are made happy, then it is okay with him. He must weigh the pros and the cons; he must ponder if any of his actions serve the larger interest of the society, and if the answer is 'yes' then he must go ahead irrespective of opposition from some vested quarters.] (378)

[Note—Refer Doha nos. 379, 382 also.]

A noble-hearted man remains unfazed by criticism by lowly people

381. कै निदरहुँ कै आदरहुँ सिंघहि स्वान सिआर ।  
हरष बिषाद न केसरिहि कुंजर गंजनिहार ॥

381. kai nidarahum' kai ādarahum' siṅghahi svāna si'āra.  
haraṣa biṣāda na kēsarihi kuṅjara gaṇjanihāra..

A lion, who is so majestic, strong and powerful king of the jungle that he can easily kill the mighty elephant (by jumping on the latter's back with great agility), is unbothered or unruffled if a dog or a jackal insults it or praises it. Their insinuations or honours make no difference to the mighty lion. The lion feels neither angry nor happy by their behaviour; he simply neglects them and pays no heed to them. (381)

[A noble-hearted great man is unconcerned by lowly people criticizing him. He goes on his chosen path because he is sure that he has chosen the path after due diligence, that he is unbiased and unprejudiced, and that he has no self-interest in whatever he does. He also knows that it is impossible to please each and everyone in this world, and it is wise to neglect lowly people who can't do any good themselves, and would not tolerate others doing good either.]

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# VAIRĀGYA SANDĪPANĪ

Of Goswami Tulsidas

‘Attributes of Saints that Kindle Renunciation &  
Attainment of Spiritual Blessedness’

[Original Text, Roman Transliteration and  
English Exposition with Notes]

## CHAPTER 3

Attainment of Spiritual Bliss, Peace and Beatitude

(The Shanti Pada)

The following selected extracts from Goswami Tulsidas’ epic Book ‘Ram Charit Manas’ will enhance the knowledge of how one can attain what essentially is the exalted state of blessedness, and is called the “Shanti Pada”. These verses show the simple and straightforward path by following which a spiritual aspirant can attain ‘Shanti Pada’, the eclectic state of bliss and peace that is narrated in the main text of Vairagya Sandipani, in verse nos. 43—to 62.

The phrase “Shanti Pada” has two words—viz. ‘Shanti’ which means ‘peace’, and ‘Pada’ which refers to a state or level of existence, a state of being.

It ought to be noted here that this state of blessedness can be obtained by a creature only by the grace of Lord God, and naught aught by any other means. And the grace of the Lord God is possible easily and only by having sincere and abiding devotion for him. In the following verses this path is shown by Lord Ram himself during his conversations with some of his devotees on different occasions as narrated in the epic Ram Charit Manas.

The following verses are cited here:--

(1) Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 35—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 36. [As advised by Lord Ram to Sabari.]

(2) Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 46 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that follow it. [As told by Vibhishan, the brother of the demon king Ravana, to Lord Ram.]

(3) Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-7 that precedes Doha no. 48. [As advised by Lord Ram to Vibhishan.]

(4) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 46. [As advised by Lord Ram to the citizens of Ayodhya.]

(5) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 61. [As advised by Lord Shiva to Garud, the king of birds.]

(6) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 78-a. [As advised by the saintly crow Kaagbhusund to Garud, the king of birds.]

Now, let us take these verses one by one and see what spiritually elevating and enlightening advice they have to give to the creature.

### Ram Charit Manas

(1) Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 35—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 36. [As advised by Lord Ram to Sabari.]

नवधा भगति कहउँ तोहि पाहीं । सावधान सुनु धरु मन माहीं ॥ ७ ॥

navadhā bhagati kaha'um' tōhi pāhīm. sāvadhāna sunu dharu mana māhīm. 7.

Now I (Lord Ram) shall narrate to you the nine forms of Bhakti. Listen carefully and establish them firmly (cherish them) in your mind and heart. (7)

प्रथम भगति संतन्ह कर संगी । दूसरि रति मम कथा प्रसंगा ॥ ८ ॥

prathama bhagati santanha kara saṅgā. dūsari rati mama kathā prasaṅgā. 8.

The first form of Bhakti is having contact with saints, holy people and those who are pious, establishing a communion with them and obtaining their fellowship.

The second is to have a deep liking for and eagerness to hear divine stories and episodes related to my life and deeds. (8)

[We have the same prescription that is also given by sage Valmiki, as well as by Lord Ram to Laxman, his younger brother.

The first component of Bhakti is 'having communion with saints and holy people'. This component is also reiterated elsewhere in Ram Charit Manas—first by sage Valmiki in Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 129; and then by Lord Ram himself in Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 16.



The second component of ‘having a deep sense of affection and liking for hearing Lord Ram’s divine stories’ is also reiterated elsewhere in Ram Charit Manas—first by sage Valmiki in Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 128 and its preceding Chaupai line nos. 4-5; and then by Lord Ram himself in Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 8, 11 that precede Doha no. 16.]

दो०. गुर पद पंकज सेवा तीसरि भगति अमान ।

चौथि भगति मम गुन गन करइ कपट तजि गान ॥ ३५ ॥

dōhā.

gura pada paṅkaja sēvā tīsari bhagati amāna.

cauthi bhagati mama guna gana kara'i kapaṭa taji gāna. 35.

The third form of Bhakti is to humbly serve the holy lotus-like feet of one’s Guru (moral preceptor and spiritual teacher), and not having any sense of pride at having done so.

[That is, one must not go about boasting that the Guru favours him and has allowed the person to serve him. This service should be selfless and done with dedication. One must not serve the Guru just to extract knowledge from him, treating this service as a means to please the Guru so that he will reveal the secrets to the disciple, but done as a matter of showing gratitude and respect to a person who has not only shown the ignorant aspirant the correct path to his desired goal but also stand by him to prevent him from falling in the countless pits that come in the way, guiding him along and coming to his aide when he needs help the most. Betrayal of trust of such a teacher, guide and help is the biggest inhuman act a person can ever imagine to perform, and a sin that would be unpardonable. But one must not be boastful of this service or do it with selfish aim only. It must be voluntary and not forced against one’s wish. This service to the Guru must therefore be genuine, selfless, diligent, sincere and arising from the heart. One must not feel that he is obliging the Guru with his service, but rather feel honoured that he is lucky to have got an opportunity to serve him. A worthy disciple is one who feels privileged that the Guru was gracious enough to let him serve the latter, and that this is the minimum he can do to repay the debt that he owes to the Guru, because it is he, the Guru, who has removed the darkness of ignorance from his life and illuminated his path with the light of knowledge.]

The fourth form is to sing and emotionally submerge one’s self in the narration and thoughts of my divine glories and virtues without any trace of pretensions, deceit, conceit, wickedness or crookedness. [For instance, one must not attend discourses and narration of the Lord’s divine stories just to pass time or with the intention to tell the world that one is a religious and pious person so that the world begins to trust him. Then this pretentious and deceitful person exploits this trust to serve his vested interests and fulfill his worldly passions and desires. This sort of hearing of the Lord’s story serves no good at all; rather it pulls the man down in the bog of deceit and falsehood which he is supposed to rise from in the first place when the went to attend the discourse about the Lord.] (Doha no. 35)

[The third component of ‘humbly serving the Guru’ is also reiterated elsewhere in Ram Charit Manas—by sage Valmiki in Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3, 8 that precedes Doha no. 129; and earlier by Tulsidas himself in Baal Kand, from stanza no. 5 of the first ‘Sortha’ (a sort of verse) with which the book Ram Charit Manas opens, and then from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 1, till Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 2.

The fourth component of Bhakti is ‘to sing and narrate Lord Ram’s divine stories and glories without any pretensions, cunning and deceit’. This component is also reiterated elsewhere in Ram Charit Manas—by Lord Ram himself in Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 16 while the Lord was preaching Laxman about Bhakti.]

चौ०. मंत्र जाप मम दृढ़ बिस्वासा । पंचम भजन सो बेद प्रकासा ॥ १ ॥

caupāī.

mantra jāpa mama dṛṛha bisvāsā. pañcama bhajana sō bēda prakāsā. 1.

Doing Japa with my (holy) name (i.e. repeating the holy name of Lord Ram as a spiritual formula), and having firm faith and belief in me—verily, this is the fifth form of Bhakti and is highlighted even in the Vedas (the primary scriptures).

[The fifth form of devotion is to constantly and persistently repeat and remain engrossed and submerged in my holy and divine name, and have unflinching and steady faith and conviction in its glory and divinity as revealed in the Vedas.]

{The first half of this line can be interpreted as follows also—“Doing Japa with my name (‘Ram’), and having a firm faith in it—i.e. in the power of the holy name as well as the efficacy of the process of repeating it as done during Japa) as a means of attaining bliss and eternity as well as liberation and deliverance-----”} (1)

[The fifth mean of doing Bhakti is ‘constant repetition of Lord Ram’s holy name ‘RAM’’. This is also reiterated earlier in Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 129 by sage Valmiki when he lists the various virtues that one must possess in order to enable Lord Ram to make his august presence in the devotee’s inner-self. The same idea is repeated by Lord Ram when he preaches Laxman about Bhakti in Aranya Kand, Doha no. 16 and its preceding Chaupai line no. 9.

Sage Valmiki has honoured Lord Ram’s holy name as a ‘Mantra-raaj’ or the king of all Mantras. A Mantra is a divine esoteric formula consisting of letters, syllables, words, phrases or even full hymns that are said to possess special spiritual magical powers that help the aspirant achieve some great goal that is otherwise not possible by other means. The Mantra acts as a catalyst and a dynamic force propelling the aspirant towards his desired goal. Each deity has its own Mantra which is like a cosmic key that enables the worshipper to tap that deity’s powers.

The Mantra of Lord Ram has many variations—the most potent one is its basic form known as the Beej Mantra or the seed from which the rest of the Mantras derive their empowerment. It consists of the Sanskrit syllable that when pronounced is heard as the word ‘Raam’. In the purest form of this Mantra, the letter ‘m’ is silent,

and there is a dot on the top which renders the pronunciation something like ‘ng’ as in the word rung or wrung in English. Therefore, the actual pronunciation is ‘Raa(ng)’.

Incidentally, this Beej Mantra of Lord Ram is also the Mantra of the Fire God. This has great metaphoric value and importance. The ‘fire’ represents the most powerful and dynamic force in creation. It is never corrupted. It burns all impurities and leaves alone the pure metal—a virtue used for purifying gold. It glows with its own light, illuminating the area around it and chasing away darkness. It provides heat and energy so much essential for life in this world. Under its influence the air becomes active—as is witnessed when wind begins to blow and howl near a raging fire. It is the warmth of the fire that helps earth foster life, to help crops grow, to help cook food and to digest this food in the body to provide nourishment to the creature.

The symbolism and parallel is obvious. The holy name of Lord Ram is the dynamic force that subtly and imperceptibly sustains life in this creation; it is at the core of the ‘consciousness’ that keeps the world alive. The repetition of this holy name fans the wind of enlightenment that drives the impurities away; it burns all the impurities.

This holy name of the Lord, i.e. the Mantra ‘Raam’ is known as the ‘Tarak Mantra’ as it takes a creature across the vast ocean represented by this world, its myriad horrors and miseries, and its whirlpool of birth and death which keeps the creature trapped in its vortex.

The general meaning and understanding of the word Japa is ‘constant repetition of any holy name of the God or any divine word or Mantra’. This verse tells us that if that is not possible for a man, or if he is not interested in it, then the next best option for him is to read good books. This will have similar good effects on his mind as doing ‘Japa’. Because if the mind is not kept busy, it will gravitate towards corrupt and pervert thinking; it cannot sit idle. If it is not possible to leash it by means of chanting or repetition of ‘Mantras’, then at least it should be reined in by reading good books instead of allowing it to wander aimlessly here and there like a vagrant indulging in useless roaming about. Remember, an idle mind is the workshop of devil. See also Trishikhi Brahmno-panishad, verse nos. 2/28-34 of Shukla Yajur Veda in this context.

The Shandilya Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, section 2 says that Japa is one of the ten Niyams or spiritual observances that any spiritual aspirant should practice. It then defines Japa and its types as follows—“Japa is to honestly practice (repeat and meditate upon) the Vedic Mantra (hymn) that has been prescribed by one’s Guru (moral preceptor). Japa is done in two ways—one is verbal or audible, and the other is non-verbal or mental or silent. The mental or silent form of Japa is done by repeating the Mantra mentally in a silent mode without uttering a word audibly, and involves concentration of the mind and turning its thoughts inwards. The verbal or audible form of Japa is again of two types—viz. one that is done loudly and the other that is simply muttered. The Japa done while muttering the Mantras is thousands of times more beneficial than doing Japa loudly, and mental Japa that is done silently is far better than even the one done by slowly muttering and it’s multiple times more beneficial.”

The importance and benefits of doing Japa has been emphasized in the Atharva Veda’s Gopal Purva Tapini Upanishad, verse no. 16 as follows—“Those devotees who do Japa (repetition) with the holy Mantra of the Lord having five steps and eighteen letters by prefixing them with the ethereal salutary word ‘OM’ standing for the supreme transcendental Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, are the ones to whom the Lord voluntarily reveals his true divine and holy form in the form of the

cosmic Consciousness known as the Atma. That is, such persons become self-realised and enlightened. This is also tantamount to Brahm-realisation.

Hence, those who are desirous of finding liberation and deliverance from the fetters that shackle them to this delusory, mortal and entrapping world are advised to do Japa with this holy Mantra.' (16).

The word Japa is derived from the root word 'jap' meaning to utter. Hence, doing Japa means to utter or repeat the different Mantra which are spiritual formulas in the form of sounds, syllables, letters, words, phrases or sentences such as complete hymns that have a high level of cosmic spiritual energy inherent in them.

The Bhagvat Gita, 10/25 considers Japa as a manifestation of the Lord God (or the worshipped deity) himself.

Japa has three forms—(i) When the Mantras are said aloud it is called 'Vaikhari Japa' or 'Vaachika Japa'. (ii) When the Mantras are inaudible and merely uttered or whispered, the Japa is called 'Upaamshu'. And (iii) when it is done mentally without opening the mouth, the Japa is called 'Maansika'.

Further, there are different classes of Japa depending upon their usage as follows—

- (i) Nitya Japa—that Japa which is done daily and regularly.
- (ii) Naimmittik Japa—that Japa which is done on special occasions—such as on the days of eclipses or special worship days.
- (iii) Kaamyas Japa—that Japa which is done for the fulfillment of certain desires—such as acquisition of wealth or success in any endeavour.
- (iv) Praayaschita Japa—that Japa which is done as a penance, for repentance or for expiation of sins.
- (v) Ajapaa-Japa—that which is done along with the passage of breath through the body as inhalation and exhalation. Usually the Hans Mantra is used for this by acclaimed ascetics.
- (vi) Vilom Japa—that Japa in which the Mantra is repeated in the reverse order. This sort of Japa is usually done to counter the negative effects of black magic rites.
- (vii) Likhit Japa—that Japa in which the Mantras are written down on paper.

Since each Mantra has a Rishi (one who first witnessed the revelation of the particular Mantra and experienced its profound effects), a Chanda (poetical style), and a Devta (the deity to whom the Mantra is dedicated), the devotee is required to pay his homage to all of them before starting to repeat the Mantra or do Japa.

Usually a prayer rosary is used to do Japa, but when one has become spiritually uplifted or has practices doing Japa over a long period of time the need for the rosary is not felt. Then the Japa becomes automatic and natural to him.

A Mantra is a Holy name of the Lord; a group of divine syllables or word symbols which have divine mystical powers. Mantras are mystical formulas having divine powers. They consist of letters, words or phrases and used to invoke the blessings of the chosen deity. Each deity has a specific Mantra just like each element in Nature has been assigned specific symbol in modern science. For example, hydrogen is recognised by the letter H, oxygen by O, nitrogen by N, carbon by C etc.

The ancient religious text honouring different Gods were composed in a poetical style called the Chanda. This system of composing the religious text of the scriptures is in vogue since earlier times and such verses are called hymns as they are

dedicated to the offering of prayers and honouring the chosen deity for which the particular hymns is meant. These hymns are also called ‘Mantras’ because they are like mystical formula specific to that deity; they help the worshipper to activate the dynamic forces of Nature and creation as represented by this deity who is actually a personified form of these forces. Each deity had a particular hymns dedicated to it much like we have specific formulas in science or mathematics to solve specific problems. No one formula applies to all the problems in a universal manner, though there are some universal ones also which can be applied to all the cases, such as the Mantra OM which is used equally for all the deities. The reason is that OM represents the supreme transcendental Brahman whose manifestations all these individual deities or Godheads are. This is like the case of one listening to a particular radio station of his choice when he must tune-in to the particular frequency in which that radio station broadcasts.

The Atharva Veda’s Hayagriva Upanishad, verse nos. 18-19 tell us how the Mantras should be repeated during Japa, and the importance of the Mantras in helping the spiritual aspirant reach the ecstasy of spiritual realisation by citing the example of the snake and the sound of the Indian lute.

Atharva Veda’s Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 12-13 describe the concept of ‘Mantra’ elaborately. Let us see how this concept is explained by this Upanishad in the context of the Mantras of Lord Ram—

“Verse no. 12 = Whatever deeds and actions an aspirant or seeker does or undertakes to do to achieve his goal are successful through the medium of a Mantra. The Mantra is a medium by which desired results are easily and comfortably attained; they are aids to one’s fulfillment of desires and objectives in life—whether mundane or spiritual\*. A Mantra makes the attainment of the desired goal a certainty.

A Mantra indicates the result or rewards that can be expected by using it just like a certain ingredient in a medicine can indicate in advance what one can expect by the use of that particular formulation. [This is because each Mantra is like a mathematical formula, and each hymn is like an equation. Even as definitive results follow the use of certain pre-determined formula and equation in scientific quest or mathematical calculations, definitive results are also expected by employing specific Mantras for doing Japa (repetition) or Yoga (meditation) and Dhyan (contemplation) with specific objectives in mind.]

The word Mantra is derived from two words—the first word is ‘Manan’ which means to persistently remember something so as to make the mind firmly rooted in it, to ponder and contemplate upon it, to deeply think about it and meditate on it so that one can arrive at some certain conclusion about the truth of that particular thing, while the second word ‘Traan’ means to give freedom and protection from some kind of torment or miserable condition, to deliver someone from his miseries and predicaments etc. Hence, a Mantra is an instrument by the help of which a person can find spiritual liberation and deliverance from his worldly torments and miseries. This is achieved by concentrating upon the Mantra, by relying upon its mystical powers and spiritual potentials, and using it to do meditation and contemplation. Constant repetition of the Mantra helps to multiply its effect and reinforce its earlier benefits. [Repetition of the Mantra is necessary for its full benefits to accrue and take effect. It’s just like the case of a patient having to repeat a medicine over a long period of time to get rid of some chronic disease. If he stops taking it before the disease is completely routed, then not only would the disease relapse but it would do so with a vengeance. Another example can be cited about a man’s skills and expertise in a

professional field—if he discontinues using his knowledge and skills after some time in life, he forgets about them and gets out of tune. All the long years he had spent acquiring the knowledge and the special skill go to a waste if they are not practiced for a lifetime. Similarly, repetition of Mantras and practice of meditation is a life-long process, and a wise man should persevere with them.] (12).

\*In the present case, this Mantra that is employed for doing Japa is the ‘Ram Mantra’ which is a Tarak Mantra (refer Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 1). This indicates that the aspirant seeks his final spiritual liberation and deliverance rather than hoping to get some worldly gain by employing it. Being a ‘Tarak Mantra’ instead of an ordinary Mantra, this Mantra of Lord Ram is the one that liberates the person from all spiritual delusions and worldly snares, and therefore to use it for some worldly accomplishments or gains would be absolutely absurd and ridiculous.

Again, since the Mantra of Lord Ram pertains to the cosmic Divinity known as the supreme transcendental Brahm which is pure Consciousness and the Absolute Truth of creation, it follows that a person who repeats this Mantra is deemed to be most enlightened and self as well as Brahm realised. He is deemed to have understood the great Truth of the ‘self’ and the Atma. He is rich with the divine virtues of Vairagya and Gyan as described in verse nos. 4-5 of this Canto 1 above.

While the eclectic Ram Mantra is used by a spiritual aspirant for his liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation, other Mantras of various demonination are used by other ordinary people to fulfill their worldly needs and desires, such as the case when one does a fire sacrifice to attain certain objectives in this world and uses various Mantras to successfully complete it. Such exercises are done with some sort of worldly aim in sight, such as acquiring various mystical powers called the Siddhis, or getting established in this world and attaining name, fame, majesty, strength, powers, material prosperity and wealth in this world, or for obtaining victory on opponents, and many other such desires and wishes for which a man usually uses a Mantra. But it is like bartering away the value of a precious gem in exchange of glass or worthless stone.

Every Mantra has a divine aspect; all of them have their own potentials and powers that are intrinsic to them, but it actually depends upon the user how good he makes of it. The wise one amongst them would obviously employ the stupendous powers and potentials inherent in any Mantra to obtain something of an eternal, abiding and matchless value—and what better use can one put the powers of the Mantra than to use it to find permanent freedom from the fetters that tie his soul to this deluding and tormenting world of a continues cycle of birth and death along with its attendant horrors and miseries.

And to top it all, if such a wise man happens to be privileged enough to come across a Mantra that is the best of them all, and which can be thousands of time more effective by putting in the least of efforts, and which gives direct access to the supreme Authority in creation which has the authority and power to grant the much-desired and much-awaited freedom for the seeker, what more can he want. Such a Mantra is this glorious ‘Ram Mantra’ which is the ‘Tarak Mantra’. It is divine, sublime, priceless and matchless in spiritual value, and provides a direct access to the supreme Brahm. This Mantra can provide ‘Mukti and Moksha’ single handedly; it is one-stop solution for all the spiritual woes of the creature as it bestows upon him liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation at one go. That is why those who accept it as their spiritual formula are deemed to be the wisest and the most enlightened souls in this creation. A man who comes to know about Lord Ram’s

‘Tarak Mantra’ would discard all other Mantras and accept this single Mantra wholeheartedly as a penance for all his spiritual problems.

This single Ram-Mantra is the letter and the spirit, the essence and the life of all the Mantras taken together. It is like the juice of all the Mantras extracted for the spiritual benefit of the spiritual aspirant. It combines at once all their varied meanings, their uses and goals, their holiness and divinity, their supernatural powers and mysticism. It is indeed like the crown jewel of all the Mantras, and it has the power and potential of all the Mantras put together into a single formula.

“Verse no. 13 = The Mantra of a deity is a complete representation of that deity.”

The Tarak Mantras of Lord Ram have been elaborately described in the following Upanishads dealing with the eclectic philosophy pertaining to the divinity of Lord Ram—Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Cantos 2-3, and 5; Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 1-12, 41-67; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 1; Canto 2, verse nos. 1-3; Canto 4, verse nos. 14; Canto 5, verse nos. 4/1-47; Canto 6, verse no. 1-6.

The Tarak Mantra of Lord Ram is elaborately described in Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition which is exclusively dedicated to Lord Ram, as well as in Tarak Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition which is dedicated to the subject of emancipation and salvation. The Tarak Mantra preached by Lord Shiva for the benefit of a dying man is that group of esoteric, ethereal and holy words, syllables or phrases that have stupendous magical, mystical and divine powers that can achieve miracles and bestows to the aspirant great potential and abilities, and one of them is the ability to find liberation and deliverance for one’s own self, and when preached to others it can even liberate sinful creatures who can never expect to find emancipation themselves. It gives freedom from miseries, fears, torments and other misfortunes that devour a creature. It liberates a creature from the cycle of birth and death, the miseries and fears associated with this world, with old age, death and their accompanying horrors etc. (Atharva-shikhar Upanishad, 2/1; Advai-tarak Upanishad, 3; and Jabal Upanishad, canto 1. The ascetic/Yogi achieves liberation and deliverance by concentrating his internal thoughts at a point between the eyebrows where he realises the supreme, transcendental existence of Brahm, and he mentally one with Brahm after this realisation (Advai-tarak, 2-3).]

**छठ दम सील बिरति बहु करमा । निरत निरंतर सज्जन धरमा ॥ २ ॥**

chaṭha dama sīla birati bahu karamā. nirata nirantara sajjana dharamā. 2.

The sixth form of Bhakti incorporates such grand virtues as ‘Dam’ (self restraint of the sense organs of perception and action the body), ‘Sheel’ (to be courteous, civilized, pleasant and polite; to have mildness of demeanours; to have good and virtues character), and ‘Virati’ from all involvements in doing so many things in this world (i.e. a sincere and profound sense of renunciation, detachment and dispassion from all material things of this mundane gross world, remaining free from their temptations, overcoming desires and passions pertaining to the world and the urge of the sense organs of the body for gratification etc., not allowing oneself to be

unnecessarily involved in countless deeds related to this world because they sap one's energy, bind him to the material world in which the deed is done with the hope of enjoying its rewards, stoking the fire of passions, creating numerous emotional distractions by way of contradictions such as attachments or repulsions, elation or dejection, sorrows or happiness, and so on).

Besides the above, one should always endeavour to live a life according to the doctrines laid down for an auspicious way of life as lived by saintly, pious and holy people. [In other words, a devotee must strive to emulate the example of saints and other holy people whose company he is expected to keep. This will help him in practice to overcome his bad habits that might have become firmly rooted in him and take time to be thrown out. It cannot be done overnight, but require diligent practice. The community of saints in which he is accepted to take a fellowship as prescribed in the first form of Bhakti will serve him in good stead, and their example can be used by a sincere aspirant as a practical guide in his day-to-day handling of the affairs of the world and problems of life.] (2)

[The sixth form of Bhakti is to have self restraint and inculcate noble and auspicious virtues such as humility, politeness, dignified existence, observing etiquette and social norms, to abstain from indulgences and remaining engrossed in multifarious worldly pursuits, and to diligently and honestly follow the righteous and noble path shown by and fit for saints and sages who are wise, erudite, enlightened and sagacious.

The importance of the virtues listed in this line, viz. (i) self restraint, (ii) politeness, (iii) renunciation, and (iv) living like a true saint by emulating their example are also reflected in the sage Valmiki's advice in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1-2 that precedes Doha no. 130 wherein the sage lists the following vices that one must avoid if he expects Lord Ram to live in his inner-self—Kaam (passions, lust), Krodha (anger), Mada (arrogance, hypocrisy), Maan (ego, pride), Moha (attachments, infatuations), Lobha (greed), Kshobha (sorrows, regret, depression, dejection), Raag and Droha (endearment with one and animosity with another), Kapat and Dambha (deceit, wickedness, conceit, pretensions etc.), and finally Maya (delusions and its attending hallucinations).

According to Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, sage Valmiki lists some of the grand and auspicious virtues a true devotee of Lord Ram must possess to enable the Lord to live in his heart. Some of these eclectic characters are the following—to be friendly to all and think for their general welfare, to treat sorrow and happiness equally with great equanimity (Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 130); to feel happy by seeing the prosperity of others, and sorry at their misery (Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 130); to accept the good virtues of all and leave behind their vices, to suffer for the good of others such as Brahmins and cows representing learned people and humble creatures respectively (Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 131); those who are diligent followers of the various laws and principles of conduct (Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 131).

In Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 16, Lord Ram has told Laxman that a person desirous of having Bhakti should follow the path of Dharma (righteousness, probity, propriety, nobility etc.) which enables him to develop the virtue of Virati (renunciation and detachment).

Then the Lord further says that one should live a life according the laws and principles laid down in the scriptures, to develop the virtue of renunciation and detachment from all material sense objects of the gross world along with total indifference to their temptations, and follow the principle of Dharma that pertains to



the Lord—i.e. the principles followed by saints and holy people. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-7 that precede Doha no. 16.

The fact that one should have no vices as Kaam, Mada, Dhambha etc. is reiterated by Lord Ram in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 12 that precedes Doha no. 16 while teaching Laxman.]

**सातवँ सम मोहि मय जग देखा । मोतें संत अधिक करि लेखा ॥ ३ ॥**

sātavam̐ sama mōhi maya jaga dēkhā. mōtēm santa adhika kari lēkhā. 3.

The next form of Bhakti, the seventh, is to have a concept of my universal existence in the form of all things in this world, to see the whole creation as my image—i.e. to believe in the philosophy of non-duality; to understand that whatever is visible in this world is one or the other form of my own divine cosmic existence. Besides this, one must treat saints and sages as more honourable and revered than me. (3)

[This universal view of existence of the Supreme Being is the fundamental philosophy of the Upanishads, and it is known as Advaita Vedanta. It stresses in the non-duality of the Absolute Truth which is known as cosmic Consciousness in metaphysics.

This is a system of thought based on the Upanishads, its chief exponent being Adi Shankaracharya. It espouses the philosophy of the unity of the individual's soul, his 'self' or the pure consciousness known as the Atma, with the supreme transcendental Brahm which is the universal cosmic 'Self' or the cosmic Consciousness which is also regarded as the Absolute, the Truth and the Reality of existence. This philosophy of the universality of the soul and the cosmic Consciousness is the fundamental basis of Advaita Vedanta.

References—Non-duality or oneness or uniformity between Brahm, the cosmic Soul, and the Atma or the individual's soul has been elaborately explained in all the major Upanishads because this is the basic theme around which the philosophy of the Upanishads is built. Some of these Upanishads are the following—

(i) Krishna Yajur Veda—Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 17, 81-110; Tejo Bindu Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 1-43, Canto 3, verse nos. 1-51, 60-64, Canto 4, verse nos. 2-30, 69-79, Canto 5, verse nos. 1-75, 90-96, Canto 6, verse nos. 1-72; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 7-8; Skanda Upanishad, verse nos. 2-7; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 93/15; Kathrudra Upanishad, verse no. 41-42; Akchu Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 2-3, 29-31, 43; Panch Brahm Upanishad, verse nos. 35-39.

(ii) Shukla Yajur Veda's Adhyatma Upanishad; Subalo-panishad, Canto 3, 5, 7 (verse no. 1), and 9 (verse no. 16); Paingalo-panishad, Canto 4, verse no.18; Niralamba; Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad.

(c) Rig Veda's Atma-poojo-panishad; Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahman 1.

(iii) Atharva Veda's Atmo-panishad; Mundak Upanishad, Canto 3, section 2, verse nos. 3-4, 8; Mandukya Upanishad, verse no. 2; Atharvashir Upanishad (which describes Rudra as a manifestation of Brahm); Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph 4-6; Canto 2, paragraph nos. 1-8, 11; Canto 8, paragraph nos. 1-7; Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 3, section 2, verse no. 2-3; Atma

Upanishad; Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 8, verse no. 7; Canto 9, verse nos. 7-8; Mahavakya Upanishad, verse no. 6; Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 2, Canto 3, verse no. 23; Canto 5, verse nos. 61-65, 77, 79; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 8.

(iv) Sam Veda—Maho-panishad, Canto 3, verse no. 7; Keno-panishad; Chandogya Upanishad.

According to the Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 8, the supreme entity known as Brahm has unique and apparently paradoxical characteristics enumerated in this Upanishad's Canto 3. This makes Brahm one of its kinds, because it is impossible to duplicate them. Advaita means non-dual. Hence the Brahm that is unique and without parallel is 'Advaita'. The Brahm that is uniform and universal, that is irrefutably and unequivocally one, and not two, inspite of the countless forms in which it has revealed itself in this creation—is 'Advaita'. The Brahm that is both visible as well as invisible, that is here as well as there—is known as 'Advaita Brahm'. The Brahm that is in the present as it was in the past, and would remain the same in the future—is 'Advaita Brahm'. Such a unique, divine, incomprehensible and incomparable cosmic Consciousness is regarded by those who are wise and in the know of things as the 'Advaita Brahm'. This Brahm is an eternal, majestic, powerful, sublime, fascinating, almighty and stupendously magnificent entity.

The metaphysical philosophy of Jiva and Ishwar or Supreme Lord being one and non-dual is explained in many Upanishads, for instance in (i) Krishna Yajur Veda's Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse nos. 41-47, and Atharva Veda's Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 77.

The Atharva Veda's Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 77 affirms that there is basically no difference between a Jiva (the living being) and the Ishwar (the Supreme Being). To quote—"The sky element is a uniform entity that is universal and immutable because it cannot be divided or fractioned or portioned. But the same sky is given different names according to the space it occupies—for instance, it is called 'Ghatakash' when it is present in the vacant space of a pot, and 'Mahakash' when it is considered in its cosmic form that is present outside the body of the pot. And, when the pot is broken, both the forms of the sky, viz. the Ghatakash and the Mahakash, become one and the same, having no separate existence or name. Hence one concludes that the different names assigned to the sky element is basically fallacious, and has its genesis in ignorance of the fundamental truth about the sky.

Similarly, the Atma is universally the same entity; it uniformly pervades throughout the creation, both at the micro level of an individual creature, as well as the macro level at the plane of creation or world at large. Therefore, to treat the Jiva (a living being; a creature) as being separate or different from Ishwar (the Supreme Being) is an erroneous idea based on fallacious premises and ignorance of the truth.

The Atma is the same in all the creatures, and this Atma is nothing but pure consciousness that is an entity established as being divine, sublime, subtle, universal, uniform, immutable, indivisible, eternal, all-pervading, all-encompassing, omnipresent etc. It is this same Atma that resides in the gross body of any given individual as well as in all other creatures in existence. This is the micro-level view of the Atma. At the cosmic level, it is the same Consciousness that exists at every level of creation; it is this Consciousness that is the cause of this creation, its development, growth, expansion, and its conclusion. Even after the end of one cycle of birth and death, it is this Consciousness that prevails, and then becomes the fountainhead from which the next cycle sprouts forth, and upon which it rests.

This Consciousness known as the Atma is the central pivot around which the whole wheel of creation revolves. Since the Atma is one and immutable, it is the same irrespective of the level or plane of creation in which it exists. Again, the Atma is pure consciousness and nothing else. Therefore it follows that there is no fundamental difference between the Jiva and Ishwar as both are the same ‘consciousness’ or Atma personified.

The treatment of an entity that is universally and indisputably ‘one’ and non-dual, i.e. which is never ‘two or more’, as having more than one forms or existences is indeed fallacious and extremely absurd.

Therefore, to treat the Jiva, the living being or the creature, and the Ishwar, the Supreme Being, as two distinct or separate entities is fallacious, erroneous and misconceived. This distinction or separation comes because one is not aware of the ‘truth and reality’, and is deluded to believe in the concept of duality or Dwaitya.

[Suppose we have different types of ornaments made of ‘gold’. A wise person is one who recognizes them all as ‘golden ornaments’, and not by their individual names, shapes or sizes, or even their usage. It is raw gold that has been crafted by the goldsmith into so many shapes and sizes, giving the same element known as ‘gold’ its myriad names and different market values. If ‘gold’ is removed from these ornaments, all of them lose their intrinsic value and inherent importance.

Similarly, everything in this creation—and that includes the Jiva—is a manifestation of Brahm. Since the Jiva is a living conscious entity that harbours the Atma, the pure consciousness, in its body, it has a special relationship with Brahm as the latter is the universal cosmic Consciousness that resides in each unit of creation. In other words, it is the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm that has transformed itself into the living being known as the Jiva. It is just like ‘gold’ being transformed into an ornament having a name other than ‘gold’.] (77).”

The entire creation is a reflection of one Supreme Being known as Brahm in the Upanishads. It is this single Brahm that has taken as many forms as the creation has taken. For instance, water assumes the form of the vessel in which it is contained; water does not have any specific form of its own. Another example is that of the sky—it fills all the space that is available, is invisible and imperceptible but nevertheless true. No one can actually see the sky; when we see an empty vessel we see its inner walls, but what about the space between these walls? Similarly, Brahm is present throughout creation, but no one can see it. It is a universal entity that is always present wherever there is space.

Lord Ram had earlier reiterated this fact of the universality of soul that inspires the wise and enlightened person to treat everyone alike and as an image of the Supreme Brahm in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 15.

The second point in this verse is to have great respect for saints and spiritually enlightened persons because they are the ones who have realised the presence of the Supreme Lord everywhere. Such individuals must be given the highest regards as they act as the torch-bearers of truthful knowledge of Brahm; they guide the rest of the world on the path that is correct and right. Sage Valmiki has also stressed on giving great respect to sages and saintly people in his exposition on the places where Lord Ram should live in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3, 8 that precede Doha no. 129.

Lord Ram had earlier reiterated this need for respect of elders and wise men when he preached Laxman in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 16.

The divine and glorious virtues of saints have been enumerated by Lord Ram himself in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 37, to Doha no. 38. Then later on, in Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 13-16, 21 that precede Doha no. 121, the crow saint Kaagbhusund also highlights the glorious virtues of saints when he preached Garud, the legendary mount of Lord Vishnu who had come to the him to remove his delusions.]

आठवँ जथालाभ संतोषा । सपनेहुँ नहिं देखइ परदोषा ॥ ४ ॥

āṭhavam' jathālābha santōṣā. sapanēhum' nahim dēkha'i paradōṣā. 4.

The eighth form of Bhakti is to be perpetually satisfied and contented with whatever one has got and never yearn for more, as well as to never find faults with others even in one's dream. (4)

[The state of eternal contentedness is the root of all happiness, and it comes only when one has developed true sense of renunciation from the world and its material charms as well as the desire of the sense organs for self gratification. Sage Valmiki has said in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 131 that a person who never wants anything and has genuine and true love for Lord Ram is the one in whose subtle heart the Lord takes up his divine residence.

Again, Lord Ram has told Laxman that 'Virati', or renunciation and dispassion towards the material world and the fascination of its sense objects and their sensual pleasures, is created by following the path of Dharma, and Virati in turn leads to success in Yoga (meditation and contemplation on the Absolute Truth), Gyan (realisation of this Absolute Truth), and Moksha (liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation).

Another important factor listed here is not to find fault with others. This will happen only when one becomes sufficiently enlightened to realise that the Atma that constitutes the 'real self' of the other person, as opposed to his physical body, is an immaculate and sublime entity that is free from all taints, and that it is the same as the Atma residing in the body of the enlightened person at the individual plane of existence, and when viewed from the cosmic perspective it is the Atma that pervades throughout this living world as the cosmic Consciousness. How can this universal and non-dual Consciousness that is immaculate, holy, divine and sublime be corrupt or tainted in one person and holy in another? To treat this Atma differently is the root cause of all spiritual dichotomies that create so much ill-will in this world. This arises from the erroneous conception that the gross physical body is the truthful identity of the individual instead of the Atma.

Of course, the body is unholy inasmuch as it is gross and directly in contact with the corrupt world. But then it is 'not' the truthful identity of the creature who is accused of having so many faults—for this identity is the Atma that is faultless!

No one is perfectly without fault, and therefore to say that I am holy and the other person is corrupt is nothing but pretension and haughtiness that must be avoided by a devotee on all counts.

The idea expressed in this verse is reflected in what sage Valmiki said in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line 1 that precedes Doha no. 131—"those who discard the faults of others and accept only their goodness and good virtues—the

Lord should treat their Mana, or heart and mind, as his good home”. The same notion applies when Valmiki further says in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 130 that—“A true devotee is friendly towards all, and is eager to be of help to everyone. He treats sorrows and happiness alike. He always speaks the truth and pleasant words by properly giving thought to what he speaks.”]

**नवम सरल सब सन छलहीना । मम भरोस हियँ हरष न दीना ॥ ५ ॥**

navama sarala saba sana chalahīnā. mama bharōsa hiyaṁ haraṣa na dīnā. 5.

And finally, the ninth form of Bhakti is to be simple hearted, to be without any deception and fraud, to be free from all pretensions, deceit, conceit and wickedness of heart, to be straightforward in one’s dealings with all others, to have unwavering and unflinching faith, conviction and reliance upon me (Lord Ram, the incarnate Supreme Being) and on no body else, and not to feel either elated or depressed (under favourable or unfavourable developments and circumstances respectively, because a true devotee is one who has total faith in the Lord and relies solely upon him, who treats the good and bad happenings of the world with complete indifference and equanimity as these things are limited to affecting the gross body and have no reach till the Atma which is the ‘true self’ of the devotee and the pure conscious that is immaculate and pristine pure). (5)

[Absence of deceit, cunning, pretensions, falsehood, wickedness and other negative traits are the signs of the true devotee of the Lord. If one does not eliminate them then he has no right whatsoever to claim that he is a devotee of Lord Ram.

Sage Valmiki has extolled these virtues in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 129 where he says that Lord Ram should live in the heart of those who ask for only reward after doing everything, and it is to have affection and devotion for the holy feet of Lord Ram. Then the sage follows this up by saying that Lord Ram should live in the heart of those who have vices such as Kaam (passions, lust), Krodha (anger), Mada (arrogance and hypocrisy), Maan (pride and ego), Moha (infatuations and attractions), Lobha (greed), Kshobha (regrets, sorrow, grief etc.), Raag and Droha (attachments and animosity respectively), Kapat and Dambha (deceit, conceit, pretension, falsehood, cunning, wickedness, crookedness etc.), and Maya (delusions and its attending problems)—ref: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 130.

In Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 12 that precedes Doha no. 16, Lord Ram told Laxman that “Oh dear, I live in the inner-self of those who have no negative traits such as Kaam, Mada, Dambha etc.” There is another way of interpreting this line as follows—“Oh dear, I am at the beck and call of those devotees who have no vices as Kaam, Mada, Dambha etc.”

As regards having complete reliance upon Lord Ram, sage Valmiki says “anyone who has taken refuge in Lord Ram’s holy feet at all times, whether he is awake or asleep, and who has no other succour and destiny except Lord Ram—verily the Lord should live in his heart and mind”. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 130.

The same idea is repeated in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 130 in which Valmiki says “he for whom Lord Ram is the only relation that matters, he for whom Lord Ram is a friend, father, mother, guru etc.—verily, the Lord should live in the Mana or the heart and the mind of such a devotee as if this Mana is the Lord’s temple.”]

नव महँ एकउ जिन्ह कें होई । नारि पुरुष सचराचर कोई ॥ ६ ॥  
सोइ अतिसय प्रिय भामिनि मोरें । सकल प्रकार भगति दृढ़ तोरें ॥ ७ ॥

nava mahum̐ ēka'u jinha kēm̐ hō'ī. nāri puruṣa sacarācara kō'ī. 6.  
sō'i atisaya priya bhāmini mōrēm̐. sakala prakāra bhagati dṛṛha tōrēm̐. 7.

Oh Sabari! Anyone who possesses even one of these forms of devotion is very dear to me, whether one is a man or a woman, or any other creature for that matter. But you have all the forms of Bhakti firmly established in your inner-being, so I am definitely pleased with you. (6-7)

[Lord Ram has preached the nine forms of Bhakti to Sabari in Adhyatma Ramayan of sage Veda Vyas also in its Aranya Kand, Canto 10. This will be narrated in Section 2 of this book “Ram Geeta”.

The significant point to note here is that Sabari belonged to a low caste, and Lord Ram tells her that she meets all eligibility criterions that make the Lord pleased with a creature, that entitles the creature to be eligible for special favour from Lord Ram. Therefore we deduce that the Lord is not concerned with which class the man or woman is born into; the Lord looks for purity of heart and the level of devotion he or she has to shower his compassion and grace upon that person.]

(2) Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 46 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that follow it. [As told by Vibhishan, the brother of the demon king Ravana, to Lord Ram.]

दो०. तब लागि कुसल न जीव कहँ सपनेहुँ मन बिश्राम ।  
जब लागि भजत न राम कहँ सोक धाम तजि काम ॥ ४६ ॥

dōhā.

taba lagi kusala na jīva kahum̐ sapanēhum̐ mana biśrāma.  
jaba lagi bhajata na rāma kahum̐ sōka dhāma taji kāma. 46.

“A living being cannot expect, even in his dream, to have any kind of peace and happiness in his mind or heart, or expect to have any kind of welfare or good, till the time he does not do Bhajan of Lord Ram (i.e. does not remember the Lord with great

love and devotion) after having distanced himself from all worldly attachments and desires which are like a treasury of sorrows and miseries.”

चौ०. तब लगि हृदयँ बसत खल नाना । लोभ मोह मच्छर मद माना ॥ १ ॥  
जब लगि उर न बसत रघुनाथा । धरें चाप सायक कटि भाथा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

taba lagi hrdayam̐ basata khala nānā. lōbha mōha macchara mada mānā. 1.  
jaba lagi ura na basata raghunāthā. dharēm cāpa sāyaka kaṭi bhāthā. 2.

“As long as Lord Ram who holds a bow and arrow does not live in the heart of a creature, it is only till then that the mischief-creating negative qualities such as Lobh (greed, avarice, rapacity), Moha (delusions, attachments, attractions), Matsar (jealousy, envy and ill-will), Mada (arrogance, haughtiness, ego, vanity etc.) find their abode in it (the heart). [It is significant to note that the Lord is shown as holding the bow and arrow here—it signifies the Lord’s readiness to destroy these negativities from the heart of his true devotees.] (1-2).

ममता तरुन तमी अँधिआरी । राग द्वेष उलूक सुखकारी ॥ ३ ॥  
तब लगि बसति जीव मन माहीं । जब लगि प्रभु प्रताप रबि नाहीं ॥ ४ ॥

mamatā taruna tamī am̐dhi'ārī. rāga dvēṣa ulūka sukhakārī. 3.  
taba lagi basati jīva mana māhīm̐. jaba lagi prabhu pratāpa rabi nāhīm̐. 4.

Similarly, only till the time the brilliant light of the sun representing the divine glory and holiness of the Lord does not shine in the subtle sky of the creature’s heart that darkness lives there, and this darkness is the breeding ground for the symbolic owl representing Mamtaa (passion and affection for material world), Raag and Dwesh (attachment for something and repulsion with another). (3-4).

अब मैं कुसल मिटे भय भारे । देखि राम पद कमल तुम्हारे ॥ ५ ॥  
तुम्ह कृपाल जा पर अनुकूला । ताहि न व्याप त्रिबिध भव सूला ॥ ६ ॥

aba maiṁ kusala miṭē bhaya bhārē. dēkhi rāma pada kamala tumhārē. 5.  
tumha kṛpāla jā para anukūlā. tāhi na byāpa tribidha bhava sūlā. 6.

[Vibhishan said to Lord Ram—] Oh Lord, now that I have had the opportunity and the privilege of having a divine sight of your holy feet, all of my greatest of fears have

been dispelled, and I am feeling absolutely blessed with all sorts of welfare and well-being. (5)

When the Lord becomes kind and graceful, none of the three types of torments of the world can affect the creature. [The three torments are the following—(i) Daivik—that related to malignant gods and stars, (ii) Daihik—that related to the body, such as old age related problems and so many diseases, and (iii) Bhautik—that related to the existential problems in this world, or problems created by other creatures.] (6).”

(3) Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-7 that precedes Doha no. 48. [As advised by Lord Ram to Vibhishan.]

चौ०. सुनहु सखा निज कहउँ सुभाऊ । जान भुसुंड़ि संभु गिरिजाऊ ॥ १ ॥

caupāī.

sunahu sakhā nija kaha'um̐ subhā'ū. jāna bhusuṇḍi sambhu girijā'ū. 1.

Lord Ram told Vibhishan—‘Listen friend! I will tell you my innate nature and temperment. It is well-known to Kaagbhusund, the saintly crow, Lord Shambhu (Shiva) and Girija (Uma or Parvati, the divine Mother and the holy consort of Shiva). (1)

[It is to be noted here that the Lord has addressed Vibhishan with the word ‘friend’. He had addressed Sugriv with the same word when the two met at the Rishyamook mountain. The glorious virtues of a true friend has already been extolled by the Lord in Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-9 that precede Doha no. 7 when he met Sugriv.

The Lord now reiterates his stand and assures Vibhishan that once the latter has come to surrender himself before the Lord with a sincere heart, he need not worry or fear from anything any more as it has now become the Lord’s responsibility to ensure his welfare and safety.

We will read in the Lord’s final statement in line no. 8 that he compares Vibhishan with a ‘saint’ and says that ‘saints like you are very dear to me’. Therefore we may also deduce that ‘saints’ and ‘friends’ are equally dear to Lord Ram, that all saints are friends of Lord Ram whether they are openly declared so or not, that the auspicious, the righteous, the holy and the glorious characters of all saints make them endeared to the Lord as if they were all his friends, and therefore all of them can be assured of the Lord’s unstinted support, protection, care and reciprocal affection even if they expressly request for such blessing from the Lord or not. It also simply means that all saintly people are friends of the Lord, and therefore the Lord is duty-bound to protect and look for their welfare according to his own self-declared policy.

In his worldly play, the Supreme Being had addressed three persons as his friend—(i) one was Nishad, the chief of the boatman community—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 88; Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 94; Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that



precedes Doha no. 151; Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 193 etc.,

(ii) the second is Sugriv, the chief of the monkey race—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 10, 23 that precede Doha no. 7; Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 43 etc.;

and (iii) the third is Vibhishan, the brother of the demon king Ravana—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 48; Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 80; Lanka Kand, Doha no. 116 Kha etc.

Lord Ram has cited three persons here who know his nature in right earnest—they are Kaagbhusund, Lord Shiva and Parvati.

(a) Kaagbhusund was well-steeped in devotion for Lord Ram and his spiritual enlightenment and level of wisdom was of such a high standard that Lord Shiva had selected him to preach Garud, the mount of Lord Vishnu, when the latter wished to learn about the true nature of Lord Ram—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 85.

The entire episode is narrated in full as the second half of Uttar Kand of Ram Charit Manas, extending from Doha no. 54 right upto to the end of the holy book in Doha no. 125.

(b) Lord Shiva is the main narrator of this divine and holy story of Lord Ram; it was conceived in his heart and mind when he was meditating upon the holy form and name of Lord Ram. Shiva had revealed it first to his divine consort Parvati or Uma, and therefore, like Kaagbhusund, she was the only one who had a first hand knowledge of this divine story and its secrets. It was on her request that Shiva had told this story in the first instance. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 30; Uttar Kand, from Doha no. 127, till Doha no. 129. Tulsidas has clearly said that the story he is narrating is none of his own creation; it is the same story that was narrated by Lord Shiva to Parvati—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precedes Doha no. 130.]

जौं नर होइ चराचर द्रोही । आवै सभय सरन तकि मोही ॥ २ ॥

तजि मद मोह कपट छल नाना । करउँ सद्य तेहि साधु समाना ॥ ३ ॥

jauṁ nara hō'i carācara drōhī. āvai sabhaya sarana taki mōhī. 2.

taji mada mōha kapaṭa chala nānā. kara'um' sadya tēhi sādhu samānā. 3.

Even if a person is considered inimical towards the whole world which consists of animate creatures as well as inanimate things, even if he has created animosity all around himself, but still if, stricken with terror and overcome with mortal fear, comes to me to seek refuge in my holy feet [2] after having abandoned or discarding all Mada (ego, pride, arrogance and haughtiness), Moha (delusions, attractions, infatuations and attachments), Kapat and Chal (deceit, conceit, pretensions, wickedness, trickery)—then I verily say I transform him into a saintly figure [3]. (2-3)

[It must be noted that the Lord first converts him into a 'saintly figure' before accepting him. Or we can say that as soon as the person coming to seek Lord's grace has this thought in his mind that he will go and surrender before the Lord by throwing

off his dirty cloak symbolised by these negative traits as Mada, Moha, Kapat and Chal, he has automatically converted himself into a saintly person—which implies that his Atma, his ‘true self’ has shed its baggage of worldly taints and emerged fresh and cleaned in its original form. It is this pristine form of the Jiva, the living being, which is eligible to attain the Lord. This process of conversion from a tainted Jiva to a holy and saintly Jiva is as automatic and natural as the chasing away of the darkness of night with the arrival of dawn.

When we read elsewhere in the preaching of Lord Ram in relation with the virtues of saints we find that the taints that are listed here in line no. 3 are the first signs that are to be eliminated from the mental horizon of anyone if he ever hopes to be classified as a saint and pious person.

Earlier, Vibhishan had unilaterally declared this virtue of Lord Ram, that the Lord does not turn away even if a person is so sinful as to have made the whole world his enemy due to his misdeeds, when he was advising his brother Ravana to surrender before the Lord, return Sita to him and avoid unnecessary confrontation with the Lord—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede Doha no. 39.]

जननी जनक बंधु सुत दारा । तनु धनु भवन सुहृद परिवारा ॥ ४ ॥  
सब कै ममता ताग बटोरी । मम पद मनहि बाँध बरि डोरी ॥ ५ ॥

jananī janaka bandhu suta dārā. tanu dhanu bhavana suhṛda parivārā. 4.  
saba kai mamatā tāga baṭōrī. mama pada manahi bāṁdha bari ḍōrī. 5.

[Now, Lord Ram goes on to describe the glorious virtues of saints which make them dear to him—]

Mother, father, brother, son, wife, body, wealth, home, friends, compatriots and other kith and kin, as well as the family (4)—a person who breaks off all his attachments and infatuations with them, who binds them all in a single rope of dispassion and detachment (i.e. who turns his mind away from them; who is no longer infatuated with them or think of them), and instead tie his Mana (i.e. his heart, mind and sub-conscious) in my holy feet (5)—(4-5)

समदरसी इच्छा कछु नाही । हरष सोक भय नहि मन माहीं ॥ ६ ॥

samadarasī icchā kachu nāhīm. haraṣa sōka bhaya nahim mana māhīm. 6.

—Who has developed exemplary equanimity and evenness of mind and views, who treats all equally and without any bias, who has no desires, hopes, aspirations and yearnings of any kind, who neither feels excited and elated nor sorrowful and depressed (simply because he practices renunciation, detachment, dispassion, self-restraint and equanimity of the highest degree), who has no fear of any kind (because

he has surrendered himself to me who am the supreme Protector, and therefore he has faith that no harm can come to him from any quarter)—(6)

अस सज्जन मम उर बस कैसें । लोभी हृदयँ बसइ धनु जैसे ॥ ७ ॥

asa sajjana mama ura basa kaisēm. lōbhī hrdayam̐ basa'i dhanu jaisēm. 7.

—Verily I say that such a gentleman finds a place in my heart like worldly wealth has in the heart of a greedy man! (7)

[A wise person is one who has broken off all his attachments with these worldly entities as these relationships are temporary and unsustainable. They act like fetters for the Atma, tying it down to the gross world that revolves around and recognizes relationships that treat the gross body of the creature as his true identity instead of the Atma. The problem in this sort of relationship is that the very basis of it is gross and temporary—because both the world and the body of the creature are mortal and perishable. Such relationships are bound to break one day, and this will lead to the agony of separation. Besides this, such relationships act as a deep bog, ensnaring the creature for generations after generations.

The only way out of this dilemma and quandary is to recognize that the Atma is one's truthful self, and that Lord Ram is the Parmatma or the Supreme Atma which is the truthful kith and kin of the individual Atma. The Lord is the real and truthful Father of all the living beings, their true friend and companion. The Atma is pure consciousness like the Parmatma who is the cosmic supreme Consciousness. This entity is eternal and imperishable—and therefore any relationship that is established between the two, i.e. between the Atma of the individual creature and the Parmatma, will have an eternal and sustainable dimension to it.

A greedy person thinks of nothing but money and wealth; he will go to any extent in acquiring it and protecting it; he is virtually infatuated with it—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, stanza no. 1 of Doha no. 130 Kha.

Likewise, Lord Ram is always on the look-out for such persons who have saintly qualities in them, and then goes all out to welcome them and afford all his protection and benevolence to them.]

(4) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 46. [As advised by Lord Ram to the citizens of Ayodhya.]

दो०. मम गुन ग्राम नाम रत गत ममता मद मोह ।  
ता कर सुख सोइ जानइ परानंद संदोह ॥ ४६ ॥

dōhā.

mama guna grāma nāma rata gata mamatā mada mōha.  
tā kara sukha sō'i jāna'i parānanda sandōha. 46.

Only those who remain submerged in the nectar representing my countless virtues and the spiritual ambrosia of my holy name (i.e. always remember them and repeats my divine name), and are free from the entanglements of Mamta (worldly attachments and affections), the tainting effects of Mada (arrogance, haughtiness, hypocrisy, pride of being superior to others, ego), and the fetters of Moha (worldly attractions and infatuations)—verily, such saints know and are able to taste the divine nectar of bliss and happiness of the highest order (that comes naturally with practicing of the above eclectic virtues).” (Doha no. 46).

[The glories of Lord Ram’s holy and divine name have been elaborately narrated in nearly all the magnificent devotional books on the theme of Lord Ram written by Goswami Tulsidas. A summary is as follows—

(i) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Doha no. 19 and its preceding Chaupai line no. 1, right upto Doha no. 27.

(ii) Dohawali, verse nos. 1-47, 57-63, 80-81, 95-100, 102-116, 126-140, 150-152, 187.

(iii) Barvai Ramayan, verse nos. 45-69.

(iv) Kavitaawali, Uttar Kand, verse nos. 1-125.

(v) Geetawali, Sundar Kand, verse nos. 40, 42, 44-46.

(vi) Vinai Patrika, verse nos. 4356, 65-70.

This entire collection has been presented in English by this author in his epic book titled ‘Biography of Lord Ram and the glory of Lord’s Holy Name’, in section 2 of this particular book.]

(5) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 61. [As advised by Lord Shiva to Garud, the king of birds.]

दो०. बिनु सतसंग न हरि कथा तेहि बिनु मोह न भाग ।  
मोह गएँ बिनु राम पद होइ न दूढ़ अनुराग ॥ ६१ ॥

dōhā.

binu satasaṅga na hari kathā tēhi binu mōha na bhāga.  
mōha ga'ēṁ binu rāma pada hō'i na dr̥ṛha anurāga. 61.

One cannot hear discourses and talks related to Lord Hari (the Lord God; Lord Vishnu) without the company of saints and holy men, and without hearing such divine discourses or talks it is not possible for anyone to get rid of spiritual ignorance and delusions.

And without elimination of delusions and ignorance one cannot develop abiding affection and devotion for the august feet of Lord Ram (which would pave the way for a person attaining eternal bliss and peace—called the ‘Shanti Pada’, the state

of existence marked by blessedness, beatitude and felicity, a state of being that makes a man fulfilled in all respects). (Doha no. 61)

(6) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 78-a. [As advised by the saintly crow Kaagbhusund to Garud, the king of birds.]

दो०. रामचंद्र के भजन बिनु जो चह पद निर्बान ।  
ग्यानवंत अपि सो नर पसु बिनु पूँछ बिषान ॥ ७८ ( क ) ॥

dōhā.

rāmacandra kē bhajana binu jō caha pada nirbāna.  
gyānavanta api sō nara pasu binu pūṁcha biṣāna. 78 (a).

A person who wishes or expects to attain liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation (pada nirbāna) without having devotion and affection for the august and holy feet of Lord Ram, is stupid and anomalous like an animal that has no tail and horn no matter how wise and erudite he may be otherwise. [To wit, it is impossible to attain spiritual bliss, beatitude and felicity, it is impractical to attain eternal peace and blessedness, and it is not feasible to get salvation and emancipation for the soul without having devotion for Lord Ram, and without surrendering oneself before the holy feet of the Lord.] (Doha no. 78 a)

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## Appendix

### About the Author

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia left home when he was approximately 29 years of age due to an inner call of his heart that told him to devote his life in the service of his beloved Lord God, Sri Ram. Worldly attractions did not enchant him at all. So, he didn't marry, and after his father's death he came and settled permanently in Ayodhya, the holy town in India associated with Lord Ram.

Presently he works as an honorary manager of a world famous Kanak Bhavan Temple at Ayodhya, and spends his time writing in English so that the world can access the wonderful nectar of metaphysical, spiritual and devotional philosophy that is contained in Indian scriptures for which they are so renowned.

His English Books published separately by a reputed publisher of India, the details of whom can be had by contacting the author on his email given below, include: (i) The series on '108 Upanishads' in five volumes having eighteen parts, (ii) Veda Vyas' 'Adhyatma Ramayan' in two parts, (iii) 'Devi Puran Ramayan', (iv) Valmiki's 'Adbhut Ramayan', and (v) 'Biography of Lord Ram' based on Tulsidas' books.

Genre of Writing: Spiritualism, Philosophy, Metaphysics, Religious, Devotional and Theological.

The author's Books are available for order online both in 'e-book' format and 'paper-back book' format at following websites—

- (a) [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) (in their 'kindle' + 'paper-back book' versions),
- (b) [www.pothi.com](http://www.pothi.com) (in 'paper-back book' + 'e-book' versions),
- (c) [www.draft2digital.com](http://www.draft2digital.com) (in 'e-book' version) through the following platforms: (i) Apple (ibooks), (ii) Barnes & Noble (nook), (iii) Kobo, (iv) Page Foundry, (v) Scribd, (vi) Tolino etc.:-

(A) List of Books that are currently available as mentioned above :-

(A-1) (1) The Chariot of God: Dharma Rath; (2) OM and Naad; (3) YOGA—Its Practice and Philosophy according to the Upanishads; (4) Ram Geeta; (5) The Revelation of Creation—as envisioned in the Upanishads; (6) The Pentagon of Creation: As Expounded in the Upanishads; (7) The Triumvirate of Creation; (8) Maya: The Whirlpool of Delusions in Creation; (9) Surdas-Ram Charitawali; (10-a) The legend of Lord Shiva: Book 1 'Lord Shiva's marriage with Parvati'; (10-b) Book 2 'Lord Shiva's Sacred Hymns'; (10-c) Book 3 'Shiva's different names & their significance, Shiva Puran, Upanishads'; (11) the Mahavakyas of the Upanishads; (13) Lord Ram's marriage with Sita (based on Tulsidas' books "Ram Charit Manas", "Janki Mangal", "Ram Lala Nahachu" & "Geetawali", and sage Veda Vyas' book "Adhyatma Ramayan"; (14) "Anthology of Sacred Hymns, Stotras & Mantras of Lord Ram"; (15) "Vairagya Shatkam" of king-sage Bhartrihari; (16) An Anthology of the Sanyas Upanishads-Parts 1 and 2; (17) "Kaag-Bhusund Ramayan" or the "Aadi

Ramayan” based on Tulsidas’ Ram Charit Manas; (18) The Legendary Glory of Hanuman; (19) “Narad Bhakti Sutra”—Aphorisms for Devotion for God and the Principles of Love for the Lord; (20) “Shandilya Bhakti Sutra”—Aphorisms for Devotion for God and the Principles of Love for the Lord according to the illustrious sage Shandilya; (21) “Bhakti Sutra Mala”—A Garland of Spiritual Wisdom in the form of an Anthology of Aphorisms pertaining to Bhakti or devotion, love and affection for Lord God; (22) Glory of Lord Ram’s Holy Name, Sacred Mantras, Stotras & Hymns; (23) Saints and Non-Saints: Their Distinguishing Characters and Qualities; (24) A True Guru (Qualities, Importance and Need of a True Teacher, Preceptor, Guide and Advisor); (25) “Sundar Kand” of Ram Charit Manas; (26) The Story of Ravana and the Epic War of Lanka—Told in Slow Motion (based on, and will have the full relevant Text of, Ram Charit Manas, Adhyatma Ramayan, Anand Ramayan, Geetawali Ramayan, and Kavitalawali Ramayan); (27) The Great Ancient Sages, Seers, Saints and Enlightened Kings of India; (28) The Metaphor of the Hansa in the Upanishads: The symbolism of a Grand Swan used to explain the wisdom of spiritual and metaphysical principles by the Upanishads.

(A-2) Goswami Tulsidas Series: (1) Book 1- ‘Dohawali’; (2) Book 2- ‘Parvati Mangal’; (3) Book 3- ‘Kavitalawali’; (4) Book 4- ‘Janki Mangal’; (5) Book 5- ‘Ram Lala Nahachu’; (6) Book 6- ‘Geetawali Ramayan’; (7) Book 7- ‘Vairagya Sandipani’; (8) Book 8- ‘Vinai Patrika’; (9) ‘Barvai Ramayan’.

(B) The following Books have been published in ‘Printed-Book Deluxe Editions’ by a reputed Indian Publisher (details given below) :

1. Detailed English renderings, with explanatory notes and commentaries of the 108 Upanishads classified according to the Vedic tradition = 6 volumes; 18 parts. [Vol. 1=Rig Veda Upanishads; Vol. 2= Sam Veda Upanishads; Vol. 3= Shukla Yajur Veda Upanishads; Vol. 4= Krishna Yajur Veda Upanishads; Vol. 5= Atharva Veda Upanishads; Vol. 6= Vedanta Concepts explained with specific references to the relevant Upanishads.]

2. English rendering of Adbhut Ramayan by sage Valmiki.
3. English rendering of Adhyatma Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas.
4. English rendering of Devi Puran’s Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas.
5. A Divine Biography of Lord Ram & Glory of Lord’s Holy Name.

Name and contact of Publisher of above Printed Books listed under (C):

Chaukhamba Publishing House, Delhi. [Sri Neeraj Gupta.]

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(C) Book under preparation:

A full-blown English rendering of Tulsidas’ epic ‘Ram Charit Manas’ is under preparation. It will be a unique Book and an elaborate one, as it would run into many thousands of pages that would endeavour to explain each single verse of Ram Charit Manas in detail from different perspectives, with the aid of explanatory notes and references.

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